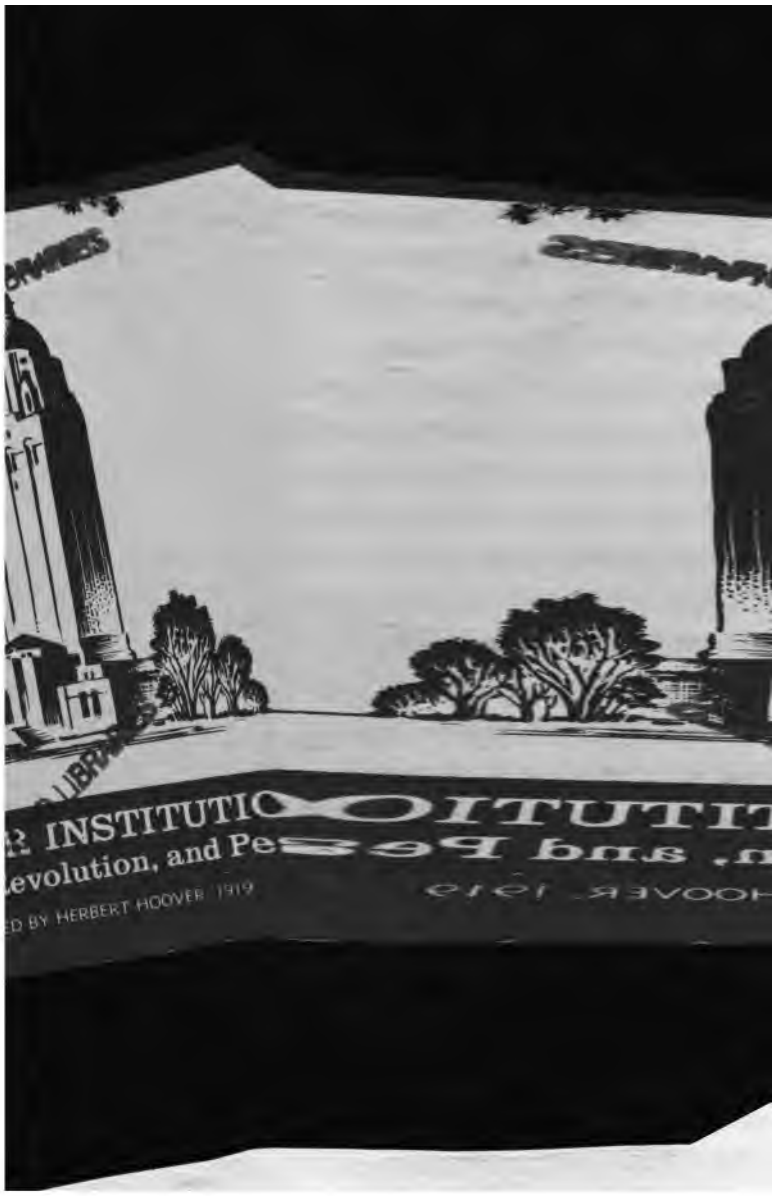
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MATABELELAND & MASHONALAND

RHODESIA OF TO-DAY

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT CONDITION
AND THE PROSPECTS OF

MATABELELAND & MASHONALAND

BY

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PREFACE

For the first seven months of this year, that is, for nearly the whole of the rainy season and for a considerable portion of the dry, I was travelling in Matabeleland and Mashonaland. I entered the country by way of Tati and Buluwayo, and, after having wandered some twelve hundred miles throughout its length and breadth, went out by Manica and Beira. I was thus enabled to gain a fair knowledge of this the first occupied and first to be developed portion of the vast territories which are within the sphere of the British South Africa Company's operations. It is my intention to summarise my experiences in this little work, and to present a general survey of the country as I found it. On my return to the Cape Colony and to England I met

numbers of people who were anxious to learn from me all they could concerning the region I had left; among these were miners from California and Australia, traders, farmers, artisans, men of all degrees and conditions, who were being attracted to South Africa by the Matabeleland boom. They said with justice that, hearing so many contradictory reports, it was a most difficult matter for them to arrive at the truth. Was Mashonaland, they asked in their perplexity, the healthiest country in the world, or was it as pestilential as the West Coast; were the Matabele goldfields to surpass all others, or was there but a delusive sprinkling of surface gold; was the Beira route into the country the most advantageous one, or had the railway proved a complete fiasco; and did the majority of travellers perish when wading through the malarious swamps of the tsetse fly belt which lie between the High Veldt and the present terminus of the Beira railway? I found that even among generally well-informed

people in South Africa there existed a remarkable misapprehension of the facts, and a very natural distrust of all the conflicting rumours that came down-country.

In another work I purpose to give the history of the Chartered Company's vast enterprise; but in this little book I will merely endeavour, while bearing in mind the numerous questions that were put to me by intending emigrants and others interested in Matabeleland and Mashonaland, to briefly set forth the conditions that will be met with in both territories, to give such results of my information as may be of service to some of those sanguine adventurers who are at present flocking into what once was the kingdom of Lobengula.

My thanks are due to the Editor of 'The Times' for the permission he has kindly given me to reproduce in this book portions of articles which I wrote for that paper.

E. F. K.

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RHODESIA OF TO-DAY

I

NATIVE LABOUR

I WILL commence this work by describing the present condition and the attitude of the natives in Mashonaland and Matabeleland; for that we should secure their friendliness and obtain their labour at a moderate cost are matters of the first importance to the white settlers.

Up to this year the progress of Mashonaland has been kept back by the perpetual menace of the Matabele raids. Capitalists hesitated to invest in so dangerous a land; it appeared a reckless venture to send valuable mining plant to the rich reefs on the ever-disturbed border. In cases where men attempted to develop their properties and put up batteries, repeated Mata-

bele scares would interrupt all work for weeks or months at a time, the native labourers deserting *en masse* to take refuge in their mountain strongholds.

But these harassing conditions exist no longer, and there are already many signs to show that the Matabele war has produced an excellent effect in Mashonaland. While I was at Fort Salisbury several deputations of headmen came in from all parts of the country to thank Captain Duncan, as Acting Administrator, for all the blessings which the Chartered Company's victories had brought to their people. The Mashonas, I found, were everywhere acting up to their faith in our power and will to protect them for the future against all marauders, whether Kaffir or Portuguese. There is no longer any difficulty in obtaining native labour for the mines, or any risk of the work being interrupted by the panic caused by a threatening foray. I observed in several districts that these timid creatures, who hitherto had dwelt in their almost impregnable villages on the summits of the granite *kopjies*, and who, knowing that a

Matabele raid would probably reap what they had sown, only produced a sufficiency for their immediate wants, had now actually summoned sufficient courage to descend to the fertile plains, where they are boldly building their huts in the open, and commencing to plant extensive provision gardens. They fully realise that for the future they will be able to accumulate property and enjoy a prosperity quite unknown to them before. While riding from Buluwayo to Salisbury I crossed the belt of neutral country which lies between the Matabele and the Mashonas. The former do not occupy it, and the Mashonas, before the war, were afraid to venture so near their formidable neighbours. The region was therefore left desolate, despite its rich pastures; but now I met several families of Mashonas, who, no longer fearful of Matabele raids, were migrating to this favoured portion of the High Veldt. Dr. Jameson, who was with me, conversed with some of these people, approved of their enterprise, and urged them to advise their friends to follow their example; for it is considered desirable, for several reasons,

that the two races should intermingle on their common borderland.

In Mashonaland there is now no difficulty in obtaining a sufficiency of that cheap and efficient native labour without which the land, despite all its natural wealth, would remain a wilderness. The Mashonas have always shown themselves less disinclined to work than are the warlike Matabele, and it is already clear that the hut tax of ten shillings a year, which the Company is gradually imposing on the natives throughout both Mashonaland and Matabeleland—a very cheap price to pay for the protection they now enjoy—will not only in time produce a considerable revenue, but is also securing to the settlers a more important advantage. The Mashonas, like all Kaffirs—an avaricious people, unwilling to part with money or cattle—are volunteering to supply their labour to the white man in lieu of paying the tax, and are flocking to the Beira railway construction, the mines and the townships, with this object. Even the lazy Matabele warrior, who of old, after he had earned enough to buy a sufficiency of wives,

would work no more all his life through, has found the hut tax a stimulus to exertion. Each kraal will now supply a certain amount of annual labour; the natives will thus be brought into contact with the white men and become accustomed to the idea of working for hire. It is found that those who come in to do a month's work, to earn their hut tax, often remain six. Their wants, simple now, will increase as their civilisation advances, and it will be necessary for them to work all the more in order to satisfy those wants. I need scarcely say that strong drink will not be one of those wants; the law that prohibits the supply of spirit to natives is most rigidly enforced, and is not a mere dead letter as it is in Portuguese South Africa and in most parts of the Transvaal. I may also mention that there has recently been a great general improvement in the attitude of the Mashonas towards the whites. In the early days of the Company, treated with a too great forbearance, these ignorant savages, despising us as weak and timorous, were insolent, often aggressive, and pilfered from the settlers on every possible

occasion. This is no longer the case; now the Company's police promptly visit the kraal of the offenders to punish or obtain compensation, while the Matabele war has taught the Mashonas that the white men are people to be respected.

In Mashonaland, therefore, the native question presents few difficulties, while in Matabeleland, also, it has now been practically settled with an ease that astonished all beholders. Those who were not in the country at the time can scarcely realise the extraordinary rapidity with which this region of turbulent savages, this last stronghold of South African barbarism, has been completely pacified. Absolute security to life and property was the immediate result of the successful campaign which broke up the Matabele military system, and very great credit indeed is due to the Administrator and other officers of the Chartered Company, who have with such admirable tact, discretion and decision brought about this end.

The war was scarcely over when I reached Buluwayo in January. The king and his broken impis were still on the Shangani, none of the

important indunas had come in, and yet I found a Civil Government in Buluwayo with its machinery in full working order, administering and settling the country without fuss or trouble. It was as if no war had ever been; the white men—a most orderly community for a new country—having fought throughout the campaign, had now laid aside their arms and settled down to their respective occupations. A mere handful of police patrolled the country and maintained order among the natives; prospectors in pairs or singly were wandering over the land in all directions, and, far from being molested, were well received by the natives, whether Matabele or Amaholi. This was my own experience when I walked unarmed, with two Matabele to carry my baggage, early in February, over the hilly country near the Mavin military kraal, one hundred miles north-east of Buluwayo. On several occasions I met prospectors, disbanded volunteers of the expedition, living on the happiest terms with the men they had so recently been fighting. I soon discovered that the inhabitants of Matabeleland are not a

difficult people to deal with. Suspicious though they are by nature, they evidently trust the white men implicitly, and I am happy to say that their confidence is rarely abused; it is not indeed to the interest of prospectors and other travellers to forfeit the good-will of these independent Kaffirs, who know how to boycott those who offend them, and if ill-treated would obstinately refuse to supply necessaries, despite threats or offers of cloth unlimited.

The natives appeared to be unaffectedly pleased to see the white man in their country, and there is no doubt that our invasion and occupation have been welcomed by the vast bulk of the Matabele nation, which consists of a peaceable people of mixed breed, descendants of captive women taken in various raids, men compelled to fight by their rulers, cruel at the bidding of their king, but naturally having no relish for war or bloodshed—in short, a mild, pastoral race that, so soon as the barbarous system that ground them down was destroyed, became quite reconciled to the new condition of things. One class alone may still resent our

rule, a small minority, however, which is never likely to show fight again—the military caste of the young Majakas, who were ever eager for war and anxious to maintain the blood-thirsty old Zulu traditions, the murderous raiders on the helpless Mashonas, who will no longer be permitted to indulge in their atrocious sport, but whom the Company's officers will soon convert into excellent native police and soldiery.

Later on, when the Administrator, Dr. Jameson, had received all the chief Matabele indunas on their 'coming in,' and had fully explained to them what the position of the natives would be under the new régime, the pacification and contentment of the people was still more fully assured. For then they learnt that the white men had no intention of despoiling or punishing them, and the indunas discovered to their joy that, far from being degraded from their former rank, they were to rule their people exactly as of old, save that they would not be entrusted with the power of life and death, the prerogative of the white indunas, and would be

punished if they acted with cruelty or injustice towards those placed under them; the Matabele indunas would be responsible to the white men for the conduct of their people, and the white magistrates would support their authority in their kraals if necessary. Such support was indeed given on several occasions while I was in the country; for in that time in some of the outlying districts individual Matabele—unruly Majakas or recently enfranchised Amaholi slaves no longer afraid of their vanquished and disarmed masters—availing themselves of the interregnum between the overthrow of the king's rule and the complete establishment of the Company's Government, were behaving in a lawless manner, lifting the cattle of their neighbours, interfering with their women, and committing other offences. These cases were tried by white inspectors of police, with native indunas sitting as assessors, and, if found guilty the offenders were fined a few head of cattle, flogged, or summarily executed, according to the gravity of their crime. It is a sufficient proof of the native confidence in the justice of

the white man that quite recently Gambo, Secombo, and eight other head indunas interviewed Dr. Jameson and requested him to place a white policeman in each of their districts, who should strengthen their authority, and to whom they could appeal in the event of disputes among themselves. This partial restoration of their former power to the Matabele chieftains, who will now compose a native magistracy under our control, has greatly facilitated the administration of the country. This system is satisfactory to the natives, and, under the circumstances, it appears to be the only one that could have been adopted.

It has also been explained to the indunas that the disarmament of the Matabele—which was only partial—is but a temporary measure, and that when the country is settled the weapons necessary for purposes of hunting and defence against wild animals will be returned to them. They also now fully understand that the white men have no intention of interfering with the laws and customs of the Matabele, save that there must be no more raiding, no more murder,

and no more witchcraft. The practice of witchcraft is being rigorously suppressed, to the disgust of the witch-doctors themselves, whose profitable occupation is gone, and to the manifest delight, tempered with superstitious dread, of the people. These witch-doctors exert an immense influence, always for evil, over the minds of these savages; horrible cruelties and all manner of crimes have been perpetrated by them. Witchcraft, as practised here, is invariably the prelude to murder, and should be stamped out as completely as Obeah has been in most of the West Indian Islands. Till now no man dared acquire wealth, or appear richer than his neighbours, for some envious witch-doctor would be sure to smell him out as a witch; he would undergo a mock trial, be found guilty, and then himself, every member of his family, and even his dogs, would be slaughtered, while all his property would be confiscated, to be divided between the king, the witch-doctor, and the judges. Protected as they now are against this horrible system, it is not to be wondered at that the natives have accepted our

rule with readiness. There were many other oppressive customs besides that of witchcraft which formerly prevented a man from ever attaining any degree of wealth or comfort. Everything in the country was practically the king's property, his the cattle, his the proceeds of the raids. Those of his subjects who went to Tati or to Kimberley, to work in the mines of the white men, forfeited the greater portion of their savings on their return to their own country, for they were compelled under penalty of death to make what was by courtesy called a present of considerable value to Lobengula.

Before the war the people owned but a very small proportion of the cattle; an important induna would only possess a dozen head or so. Since the war they have not only been assigned a sufficiency of cattle for all their needs, but they have undoubtedly appropriated a great number of the royal cattle, falsely asserting that these were their individual property. The Chartered Company, as the successor of Lobengula, lays claim to all the goods of the late king; but it will of course not be feasible to enforce a

restitution of all the cattle that have been 'jumped' by the natives, and the Matabele will probably now be far richer in cattle than they ever were before. Any rights the people may have possessed to the use of the king's vast herds they still possess in full. Instead of taking charge of these cattle for the king, they now do so for the Chartered Company, and have the use of the milk as they had formerly.

The sudden pacification of Matabeleland is thus easily explained. The people realise that they can cultivate their lands and acquire cattle without fear of the witch-doctor's eye and Lobengula's murderous greed. Of magnificent pasture on the High Veldt there is practically an unlimited supply; the natives never made use of a tithe of it; there is ample room for both black and white on those healthy uplands. The Matabele have been told that they can return to those portions of the High Veldt which they occupied before the war, there to cultivate their gardens and look after their cattle as of old, save where circumstances render a different course advisable. Thus

kraals situated amid extensive auriferous reefs, likely to attract numbers of white prospectors, or upon sites of proposed townships or other public works, will have to be removed; but in all cases the natives will be assigned lands as favourable for grazing and agricultural purposes as those they have been asked to surrender. As it is the universal custom of the Kaffirs to destroy their kraals after having occupied them for some years, and to remove to other locations, this enforced migration, which after all will only be necessary in a limited number of cases, forms no real grievance, and at no indaba at which I was present did a single chief raise any objection on this score.

The policy, therefore, which has been adopted by the Company, and which commends itself to all on the spot, is to leave the Matabele kraals so far as is possible where they were. They will thus be scattered among the farms of the white men, as in Mashonaland, where the system is working well; native labour will be readily procurable, the Kaffirs will soon attain such civilisation as is possible to them, and

moreover, they will be under our immediate supervision. It is well that the system of forming large native reserves, which has been found so disastrous in other portions of South Africa, has not been adopted in Matabeleland. To set these savages apart in reserves would be to indefinitely retard their civilisation. Rich in cattle and mealie crops they would refuse to labour for us, and would pass their lives in indolence; they would be outside our control, and consequently murder and witchcraft would flourish as of old; while, gathered together in numbers at their periodical beer drinkings, the young men would talk big, scheme for war, and hatch all manner of mischief.

It is, of course, the aim of the Chartered Company to procure a plentiful supply of native labour, and the only method of insuring this is to give the Matabele who come in to work kind and fair treatment and honest wage. It is totally untrue that (as has been recently stated) compulsion or threats have been employed; such a system would defeat its own object, for there would be nothing to prevent

the men running away. The responsible indunas have been told that if the young men in their respective districts choose to work for the white men in the mines, the fields, or the townships, they will have good food and will be guaranteed a minimum wage of ten shillings a month. Every inducement is held out to them to supply their voluntary labour, and not without satisfactory result. They quite realise that the white Government is determined to do them justice. In the few instances in which individual prospectors or other white men have attempted to force the natives to work, or have otherwise ill-treated them, the offenders have been severely punished, and when I was in Buluwayo two or three white men were confined in goal on this account. At the end of last July 800 Matabele came into Buluwayo to work on the brickfields and in other capacities. Of these the majority are still there, having voluntarily entered into a further engagement at the end of each month, which is a sufficient proof that they are not ill-used.

It is to be hoped that they will not become

even too well off, and wax fat, lazy, and useless, they and their cattle multiplying in peace, all their wants being supplied with a minimum of labour—as is the case in Bechuanaland, where the native is in enjoyment of every comfort he can appreciate, and is prosperous even from a European standpoint, his lot being undoubtedly far preferable to that of the bulk of the peasantry in Great Britain. It will probably be found advisable to establish an official scale of pay for native labour in Matabeleland, so as to obviate that rapid and quite unnecessary rise in the rate of wages which has occurred in other parts of South Africa, to the detriment of European enterprise, without being in the least degree conducive to the real welfare of the Kaffir.

Some of the old traders in Matabeleland, jealous of the Chartered Company's intrusion into what they looked upon as their own preserve, profess to be of opinion that the Company is making the mistake of treating the natives altogether too kindly, that this clemency will be considered a sign of weakness and

cowardice on the part of the white man. I cannot agree with this view. I do not believe the Company's clemency is misunderstood at all. I was present at all the indabas or official interviews between Dr. Jameson and the principal Matabele leaders at the close of the war. On first presenting themselves the chiefs looked downcast, and waited with forebodings to hear the 'Great White Chief's' will; but, at the end of the interview, when they understood how the Matabele were to be treated by their conquerors, their minds were evidently much relieved. 'Now we can go away and sleep,' they used to say—the Matabele way of conveying that one's fears have been set at rest. To all appearance they were sincerely grateful, and were quite in earnest when they said that they had no grievance against the white men, and for the future would be our friends. The gallant stand of Wilson and his men, who, as old Umjan, who led the attack upon them, admiringly said, 'fell fighting together in a ring, men of men, whose fathers were men before them,' has quite dispelled any idea the

Matabele may have held as to the timidity of the white settlers. Wilson's party did not fall in vain; the story of the Shangani will be told in many a kraal throughout South Africa, and will go far to check the ardour of turbulent tribes, and preserve peace throughout the vast regions we control. No conquered people were ever treated with more consideration, but it will not injure our prestige to have exercised a generous leniency. Dr. Jameson declared to the assembled indunas that it was the Company's earnest wish that the white men should live in friendship with the black, and as Administrator he has certainly done his utmost, and apparently with complete success, to bring about this consummation.

II

THE CLIMATE

In Matabeleland and Mashonaland the heavy rains fall in the summer months of December, January, February, and March. During the dry season, when the rainfall is but slight, the climate seemed to me to be as delicious as any I had ever experienced. One who travels across the Matabele or Mashona Highlands in the winter months has cold nights and heavy dews for his bivouacs; but by day he rides or walks like the old Athenians, 'through most pellucid air,' with generally a keen health-giving breeze blowing and a cloudless sky overhead.

Even in the rainy summer months the climate is not unpleasant, neither is it seriously unhealthy. I never found the heat oppressive. There is nearly always a fresh wind; the downpour is seldom continuous, and when between

the showers the sun shines out of the rift of blue sky and glorifies the rich tints of the sodden, flower-spangled vegetation, the aspect of the country is peculiarly charming, while the air, purified and cooled by the rain, is balmy and even bracing. I found it difficult to realise here that I was within the tropics; it was possible to march with comfort under the Matabele sun in midsummer. But it is a somewhat trying season, nevertheless; for the swollen rivers and deep sloughs cut off communication and interrupt all work for weeks at a time, and it is then that the settler, having no employment, is apt to wax restless and discontented, airs his divers grievances at agitation meetings, and perhaps frequents the canteens more than is good for him.

Mashonaland has earned an unenviable and undeserved reputation for unhealthiness. It is somewhat hotter in that country than in Matabeleland, and it appears that malaria is more prevalent, which is no doubt partly due to the fact that there are fewer cattle in the country; the grass has not been eaten down, the pasture is not 'tame' as on the Matabele High Veldt, but

rank and high—twelve feet in height and more in the lowlands—and when rotting away after the rains is naturally productive of fever. But the malaria of both territories, I was assured by the medical men resident in the country, and I could observe the fact myself, is of a very mild type when compared to the fevers of any other tropical country, and when serious complications follow an attack these are generally due to irregularity of living on the part of the patient. Men die of whisky, and their friends charitably call it fever. Among the pioneers of a new country are to be found many men whose temperament would lead them to an early grave in whatever clime they lived, restless, dissipated men of broken fortunes and shattered constitutions, ever ready to fly to the bottle (a very poisonous bottle in Rhodesia) as the one relie to the monotony of their existence. It is not fair to judge the climate of a new country by the death rate of its first settlers.

While travelling in the rainy season I have met prospectors, far away from the nearest white settlement, making weary marches across

the swampy wilderness, ill-fed, wet through for weeks; and these men, whenever they reached a camp, sick and debilitated by privation, would promptly indulge in a three or four days 'burst' on vilest whisky. The hardships that were undergone by the members of the pioneer expedition are now historical, and few of those men would be now alive were the malaria of a really virulent nature. In what country in the world could men live with impunity the lives they led? To bivouac for weeks on the rain-swept veldt, provided with insufficient clothing, often with insufficient food and that of bad quality, the comforts and even necessaries of life being absent—such has been the experience of every pioneer and trooper in the country. It is obvious that such conditions must predispose to fever and dysentery.

Of the men who took part in the recent campaign, the troopers of the Shangani patrol more especially endured great privations, and this too in the rainy season and in the most unhealthy lowlands of the whole country. The surgeon of the Bechuanaland Border Police

informed me that not one of these troopers had died of fever or of any disease that could be put down to climatic influence. I was with these men at Inyati camp a month or so after their return from that disastrous patrol; they looked as healthy and as hard a body of men as one could wish to see.

I myself marched in the heart of the rains through the unhealthy district of Mavin. I rode from Buluwayo to Salisbury, 300 miles, at the most sickly season of the year, that which immediately follows the last autumnal rains, when, in places, the subsiding waters leave behind them leagues of putrifying mud and rotting vegetation. I walked through the low-lands of Portuguese Gazaland to reach the terminus of the Beira railway, and made several other journeys in different portions of the country, sleeping out on the open veldt nearly every night, in rain or soaking dew; and I can honestly say that I never enjoyed better health in my life, while the white men who accompanied me on some of these journeys were not one whit the worse for the exposure.

The High Veldt is undoubtedly healthy in both territories. Buluwayo itself, for example, appears to be entirely free from malaria, for I did not hear of a single case of fever that had been acquired in the township or in its neighbourhood. That the Low Veldt is malarious during the rainy season is a matter of no great consequence, for, so far as is yet known, there is nothing to attract the white man to that region; the auriferous reefs, the lands adapted for farming, are on the High Veldt, and it is also along the High Veldt that the principal roads of the country are carried.

In short, this is a 'white man's country' so far as the climate is concerned; there is no fever here that should stay the intending British emigrant, and be it remembered, moreover, that fever appears to be the one disease he has to dread, for one hears nothing here of the influenzas, the consumptions, the rheumatics, of Old England. What fever there is will gradually disappear before occupation and civilisation, as it has done in many unhealthy districts of the Transvaal and the Cape Colony. Those who knew

the Diamond Fields and the Randt Goldfields in the early days will remember their fevers and their high death rate; and yet things have so completely changed within a few years, that these districts are now actually frequented as health resorts. Some forty white men, traders and missionaries, most of whom I met, have been living in Matabeleland for a number of years. They all appear to enjoy good health, and their complexions are as a rule of that ruddy hue which is quite incompatible with the malarial diathesis. The few white children that have been born in the country are also as rosy of cheek and as sturdy of limb as if they had been reared in England. As for Mashonaland, several writers have exaggerated the evils of the climate, or have at any rate described a state of things that no longer exists or is passing away. With increased facilities of communication, the privations that had to be endured by the early settlers can be avoided. So soon as the white population is properly housed and properly nourished, this region for salubrity ought to compare favourably with any of our colonies.

III

GRAZING AND AGRICULTURE

THE traveller who has reached Matabeleland by way of the dreary Bechuanaland plains can readily understand how it is that Lobengula's father and his people, when driven from Marico, trekked 500 miles to the northward before they settled again—there is no such good land between. The extraordinary richness of the soil in both Matabeleland and Mashonaland is at once revealed by the luxuriance of the vegetation. The first glimpse of Matabeleland, as one emerges from the pass beyond Mangwe, on the northern road, is particularly pleasing, and gives one a fair idea of the general character of the High Veldt. As I saw it in early morning, it was as delicious a scene as could well be imagined. From the ridge on which I stood I could see far over the country; isolated granite

kopjies of curious formation, generally well wooded or covered with flowering bushes, and crowned at the top with great rocks, shaped like ruined castles, were scattered over the undulating veldt, across which wound many streams of clear water, flowing over sandy beds; ranges of wooded hills hemmed in amphitheatres of rich pasture full of a variety of beautiful flowers, the haunts of birds and gorgeous butterflies.

When one has travelled day after day across the flowery veldt, finding at certain seasons of the year a profusion of delicious wild fruits of many varieties, with which one could sustain life if one were lost; when one beholds the magnificent crops which reward the lazy Kaffir for a mere scratching of the soil, but a soil inexhaustibly rich, replenished as it is each rainy season by the matter washed down from the disintegrating granite of the *kopjies*, one realises that the title of the Promised Land was not altogether wrongly bestowed on this fair region. I will now attempt to show what the conditions of farming will be (*a*) in Matabeleland and (*b*) in Mashonaland.

(*a*) In Matabeleland.

That a great portion of the Matabele High Veldt is admirably adapted for farming there can be no doubt. The best districts are, of course, those in which Lobengula used to graze his vast herds of cattle, and where the grass, eaten down for years, has become sweet and wholesome for cattle. Boer and Colonial farmers who have come into this country speak enthusiastically of its possibilities.

A large number of farms have already been pegged out. Of these some 700 are 'volunteer farms,' which were granted free to the men who took part in the late expedition. Each volunteer farm is of 3,000 morgen (6,000 acres), carrying with it a nominal annual quit rent of ten shillings. These farms are transferable, and are now to be bought at from 45*l.* to 150*l.* Farming rights, entitling the holder to peg out 3,000 acres, can also be bought directly from the Company at eighteenpence an acre; but in the case of these farms a *bonâ fide* occupation must

be effected within a reasonable time—a condition not attached to the holding of a volunteer farm. The Company, in thus refusing to sell its land under what it considers a fair value, irrespective of the present quotation of the volunteer farms, and in adding the occupation condition, is carrying out its promises made before the war to the volunteers, who very properly are to have the first chance in the new country. The measure will also prevent the land being bought up at this early stage by large syndicates for purely speculative purposes.

While riding from Buluwayo to Salisbury, following the route by which the Salisbury Column had entered Matabeleland, and so passing the Shangani and Bembezi battle-fields, I traversed what is, perhaps, the finest portion of the Matabele High Veldt for a distance of some 250 miles. This route is carried along the watershed between the rivers flowing eastward into the Crocodile and Sabi, and those flowing westward to the Zambesi. I rode day after day through the keen bracing air, under a blue sky, across a magnificent country, undulating pas-

ture diversified with groves of various trees and bushes, and watered by a multitude of clear streams; even in the driest seasons there is no lack of water, and, indeed, there are few regions in the world so well watered as Matabeleland and Mashonaland. From high ridges we often overlooked vast landscapes, the dark summits of the Matoppo Hills and other ranges closing the horizon to the east. It would be difficult to find anywhere a country better adapted for farming than the High Veldt of the great watershed, which covers an immense area. The climate is excellent; there is ample room for a great number of immigrants, for this region appears to be but sparsely occupied by the natives, though it abounds in wild animals; the now somewhat rare black wildebeeste is to be found here, and lions are numerous in some parts.

Even though gold prospects prove deceptive, and the consequent absence of a local market checks farming enterprise for the present, the pressure of population in Europe must ultimately turn the tide of emigration in this direction. Whatever may befall the Chartered

Company, it will have deserved well of Great Britain for having pegged out this rich land for her posterity. The contour of the country in many places offers facilities for artificial irrigation during the winter droughts, so that the rich soil could readily be made to yield abundant summer crops, as in the Transvaal; and the day must come when this verdant wilderness, with its infinite possibilities, this breezy highland tract of broad vales, gently sloping hills and limpid streams, will gladden the traveller's eyes with pleasant homesteads, orchards, and waving cornfields, as do at present the happy valleys of Marico, the home of the Matabele sixty years ago.

But we may not have to wait long for the change. The principal gold belt of the country extends from end to end of this watershed. A large mining population is likely to soon afford a market for the farmer's produce. The Gwailo goldfield, the most promising in Matabeleland, of which I shall have to speak later on, is in the centre of this doubly-favoured region. The Gwailo township will soon be a considerable place. When I passed through it the township

consisted of one mud, thatched hut—the post-office and hotel combined; but since then a number of stands have been purchased from the Company, and building is rapidly progressing. The mineral wealth of the district is attracting hundreds of white men; syndicates, companies and individuals have pegged out a number of farms, one syndicate alone possessing a magnificent estate of 80,000 acres. There are other districts as well adapted for farming as the Crocodile-Zambesi watershed, and in all directions around Buluwayo itself rich pasture and land capable of irrigated cultivation is to be found.

An intending farmer will, of course, realise that for some time he will have to contend with difficulty of communication, and distance from an adequate market. But he can at present purchase the best of grazing or arable land at a trifling price, and should the gold reefs answer the expectations now held by even cautious miners, and more especially should an alluvial goldfield of any extent be discovered, the value of land will of course greatly increase. As for

other drawbacks, it does not appear that locusts work more mischief here than they do in other portions of South Africa. Lung sickness among the cattle is not more prevalent than in the Transvaal, and inoculation for this disease has proved quite successful. The principal curse of the country is the devastating horse sickness, for which no remedy has yet been discovered, so that salted horses (those that have recovered from the sickness and have immunity for the future) are very expensive; but this disease will no doubt die out as the country becomes occupied, even as it has already done in districts further south.

(*b*) In Mashonaland.

Special farming rights were granted to members of the old Pioneer Force in Mashonaland. These, like the volunteer rights in Matabeleland, entitle the owner to peg out a farm free of any conditions as to *bonâ fide* occupation. These pioneer farms are of 3,000 acres each, not of 6,000 as in the case of the volunteer farms, and

carry an annual quit rent of 1*l.* About 190 of these rights were issued, and some are occasionally offered for sale at from 50*l.* to 60*l.*; a located farm is of course much more valuable than a right.

These rights are undoubtedly very cheap at this price, when it is considered that Mashonaland has had three years' start of Matabeleland, that more is consequently known about its possibilities, and that its ultimate prosperity is a matter of greater certainty. There is no reason for coming to the conclusion that it is not in all respects as good a country as Matabeleland. There has been a tendency of late to boom Matabeleland at the expense of the first settled territory, and a considerable depression has set in in Mashonaland. But this will not last long; the fortunes of Matabeleland and Mashonaland are so intimately linked that the two cannot but advance together. When I was in Mashonaland the townships were half deserted—there had been a diversion of population and capital to Matabeleland; but those who remained realised that this was but a temporary evil, and that

when the first wild rush to the new country had spent itself, one territory would participate in the prosperity of the other. The development of Mashonaland has been delayed by various causes, the principal of which have been lack of capital, difficulty of communication (and hence an extravagantly high scale of prices for all commodities), and the scare of Matabele raids. Capital is at last flowing in; the Beira railway is rapidly progressing; and the last-mentioned evil has been removed for ever. There is every sign to show that Mashonaland will now attain prosperity by rapid strides. It is very unfortunate, however, that the long stagnation crushed many of the smaller men, who could not afford to wait the turn of the tide, but were compelled to sell their properties at depreciated prices; and among these men were some of the pick of the country—the original pioneers who won Mashonaland.

In the last official report of the Chartered Company on agricultural and stock-farming prospects in Mashonaland, it is shown that but little has been done so far, but that what little

has been attempted fully proves the great capacities of the country. Even in districts where the soil is sandy and comparatively poor, the natives produce good crops. Wheat, rice, forage, mealies, tobacco, and all the fruits and vegetables of Europe and the sub-tropics do well here. Dairy farming and market gardening near the townships prove very remunerative, but at present these industries are mainly in the hands of the East Indian coolies. Tobacco can be cultivated nearly everywhere, and is grown in all the native kraals. Sugar, coffee, and other tropical produce thrive in some districts. Indeed, Mashonaland appears to be better fitted for agriculture than Matabeleland; but the latter country is, and will be for some years to come, more favourable for stock-farming, the grass, as I have already explained, having been eaten down for forty years by the vast herds of the king's cattle, and rendered 'tame.' Many of the king's cattle are now being brought into Mashonaland; they show a good strain of blood, and his sheep, too, are often of good stock.

Wherever I travelled in Mashonaland I found

the country well watered and the soil rich. I visited most of the few real farms that at present exist. Most of the so-called farmers are merely prospectors and storekeepers, who have done next to no work on their land. Among other farms I visited that of Morgen Ster, a mission station of the Dutch Reformed Church, which is about three miles from the extraordinary ruins of Zimbabwe. Here the missionaries have provided visible proof of the richness of the soil and of the farming possibilities of the land by bringing under cultivation an extensive tract, from which they supply the township of Victoria with vegetables and other produce. On the long irrigated terraces of red soil the bananas and other fruit trees of the tropics grow side by side with the figs, peaches, apples, and vines of Europe, while all the vegetables of England thrive on these fertile acres. Near Salisbury, also, similar and equally successful farms are to be found.

But what appeared to me to be the pick of the country from the agricultural point of view is the beautiful district of Manica. Leaving the

township of Umtali I walked over the Manica gold belt, which extends from west to east along the ranges of the Manica mountains. My way lay along the summits of the breezy ridges, and I looked down upon fertile valleys in whose hollows nestled the kraals and gardens of the Kaffirs. Here and there, too, near the shafts and adits of the mines, were the houses of managers and prospectors, each surrounded by its carefully irrigated garden, where pumpkins, cauliflowers, potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, gooseberries, currants—in short, all the fruits and vegetables of England—flourished and attained a size that would have gladdened the heart of a British gardener. Manica is the garden of this portion of Africa. Almost anything would grow here. The oranges and other fruits are delicious. In these warm valleys the soil is often forty feet in depth, and is well suited for the cultivation of tropical produce. Plantations of coffee, sugar, and tea would probably prove remunerative. There is fine timber on the hills, and the bark of one species of tree is employed for tanning, while indiarubber grows wild in

the lowlands. I may mention incidentally that poultry—the main diet of the European traveller—are free from the diseases which play havoc with them in other parts of the country.

This district enjoys one inestimable advantage over the rest of Rhodesia—the Beira railway is already close to Manica and will shortly pass through the heart of it, affording cheap and rapid communication to the East Coast. It is this fact which renders a scheme, which was suggested to me by one who has carefully studied the subject, appear feasible. In Manica the dry and rainy seasons are not so sharply defined as in Matabeleland and Western Mashonaland. It is true that here, too, in winter the grass dries up in the valleys and on the lower slopes of the hills; but on the ridges and domed summits of these mountains, from five to six thousand feet above the sea, light rains fall even in the heart of winter, so that the grass remains green, and is generally short and sweet, affording the best of pasture. It was pointed out to me that scientific dairy farming, now so profitably carried on in Victoria and other portions

of Australia, ought to prove equally successful here. From the grazing grounds of Victoria, which, unlike these, have to be irrigated at considerable expense, quantities of butter are exported annually to England. An association of small farmers from England might do something of the same sort here so soon as the Beira railway reaches the district. A hundred head of cattle would probably go to a 300 morgen highland farm. The milk could be carried down from the farms by the natives—they are hereditary carriers—to some central factory near the railway, there to be converted into butter for the home market. This scheme appears practicable; but unfortunately that portion of the Manica Highlands which is perhaps the best adapted for grazing purposes has been declared a goldfield by the British South Africa Company, and is therefore practically closed to farmers according to the Company's present law.

It will be remembered that the eastern frontier of Manica has not yet been wholly demarcated. After following the gold belt for some ten miles I reached the summit of one

of the highest peaks of the country, known as the Crow's Nest, from which I overlooked an immense and magnificent landscape extending far into Portuguese Gazaland. This peak is on the divide—the watershed between the Umtali and Revue rivers—which the Portuguese claim as their frontier; but the Chartered Company maintains that the undulating country between this divide and the Chua Hills, several leagues further east, forms part of its territory. From where I stood I could see the whole of this debatable land stretching out before me, a land of rolling downs, wooded mountains and rugged peaks, a land known to be rich in gold and other minerals, and whose valleys, into which the streams dash in cascades from many ravines, are of exceeding fertility, planted with native gardens of bananas and other tropical fruits. The possession of this debatable belt is still a point of issue between ourselves and the Portuguese (whose title, from what I gather, is shadowy in the extreme). We should certainly not lightly abandon so rich a district if we can show our right to it.

IV

EMIGRATION TO MATABELELAND

DISTANT and difficult of communication as is Matabeleland, and expensive as is the journey, the rush of adventurers thither commenced even before the war had been brought to a close. Last April the white population of Buluwayo itself numbered about 250; but in August there were some 3,000 Europeans in the township and the immediate vicinity. When I was there the community certainly seemed a remarkably orderly one, when it is remembered that this was then but the rough camp of a 'new rush;' there were few black sheep, the majority being respectable men, each intent on pushing his own particular business. In fact, at that time the people who were entering the country were mostly of the right stamp; it made one feel proud of one's race to look at the crowd of

some 500 men—of the fair sex only one—which attended the gymkana meeting at Buluwayo on Easter Monday. Energetic, stalwart, bronzed, keen of eye, these pioneers of Matabeleland were the very pick of Anglo-Saxon manhood. The Company has wisely restricted the issue of canteen licenses to a few well-known and responsible traders, and there is little of that drunken rowdiness generally associated with a rush of miners and adventurers to a new country. Crimes of violence have always been singularly rare on the gold and diamond diggings of South Africa. The revolver and the knife of old California are not tolerated, and lynching is unknown. But at Buluwayo, as elsewhere in South Africa, the ancient British method of settling a dispute is a recognised institution, and you will not uncommonly see two prospectors or others who have come in 'on the spree' having it out in a few rounds outside the canteen in orthodox style. I have never come across a community more free from brutality, fonder of fair play, and more manly than that of the temporary camp of Buluwayo

a few months back. One lived in a healthier moral atmosphere than one does in most parts of the world.

All these people seemed sanguine of the country's future, and they gave a substantial proof of their confidence by investing considerable sums in farms, mining rights, stands and other securities. I was present at the auction of the first 100 stands, or township building lots, in Buluwayo, which took place on March 24. The upset price of a stand was fixed at 30*l.*; all were sold, at an average price of 50*l.*; in some cases keen competition for stands in the market-place raised the bidding to 160*l.*; and this despite the onerous conditions of sale, for, unless the purchaser of a stand had within three months erected upon it a substantial building of iron or stone of the value of 200*l.*, he forfeited his stand and the deposit he had paid; moreover, at that time, pending the settlement of the country, the Chartered Company was unable to give a valid title to a stand-owner and refused to register any transfer to a third party, the result being that speculative buyers were kept

out and the bidding was confined to *bonâ fide* purchasers, men who intend to remain in Matabeleland and take a part in its development.

That those in the country are not losing faith in its prospects is shown by the marvellous result of the last sale of stands in Buluwayo, held on July 31 and August 1. Forty-five lots alone realised 9,207*l.* Ten lots were sold at over 400*l.* a piece; one fetched 900*l.* 36,530*l.* was realised by the Company in these two days, and in all it has received about 50,000*l.* by the sale of stands in Buluwayo and Gwailo since the occupation. On these stands costly buildings are rapidly rising. The Standard and other Cape banks, having evidently come to the conclusion that Buluwayo's prosperity is not a mere bubble boom, are expending large sums on permanent offices. The Government Buildings are now in hand, and one hotel alone is being erected at a cost of 5,000*l.* By the end of July about 50,000*l.* had been laid out in building.

On April 25, Matabeleland was thrown open to the world; those who took part in the cam-

paign having already secured their promised award of land or reef, all others who choose are now at liberty to come into the country and peg out their claims. So now the adventurers are flocking in their hundreds and thousands into Matabeleland, numbers deserting the Randt and Mashonaland for the purpose, all eager to try their luck in the land of gold. Most of these are settlers of the right sort, but numbers, of course, are the very reverse. This is no country for the 'waster,' the man of no trade and no means. Men of this class, arriving penniless, not being able to turn their hands to any work, soon fall on the charity of the Chartered Company, which here, as of old in Mashonaland, has had to issue free rations to the indigent, a generosity which has been much abused. The man who can work, and honestly intends to work, will in many cases be assisted until he can obtain employment; but the 'waster' will be compelled to wend his way back to the south as fast as he is able.

Just now ignorant people at home appear to imagine that they only have to land in South

Africa to find a fortune lying at their feet ready to be picked up. Numbers of English clerks and others, accustomed to a town life, have contrived to reach Matabeleland, only to be bitterly disappointed, for it is no country for such as they, and every step should be taken to prevent these poor fellows from crossing the ocean, leaving possibly a small competence, to encounter almost certain failure, misery, and often death. Strangely infatuated indeed were some of the men I met tramping up the road to the Promised Land, veritable Micawbers, confident that something must turn up to their benefit in such a golden realm. On reaching Buluwayo they found that there was no work which they could do, and that all the necessaries of life were at nearly famine prices, so they soon exhausted their resources. Many even arrived with insufficient clothing and bedding to shelter them during the winter, and the Company has found it necessary to issue a notice warning immigrants to provide themselves with these necessaries before entering the country. Some of the poor wretches never even behold the land

of their desire, but perish of fever or privation while tramping up the long road from the south, through the wilds of Bechuanaland. Shortly before I left Buluwayo a young Scotchman, who had come all the way from Glasgow, attracted by the tales of gold, to seek his fortune here, was found one morning lying dead under a tree just outside the camp; he had succumbed when within a mile of the El Dorado towards which he had been struggling.

It should be clearly understood by this class that no alluvial goldfield has yet been discovered in Matabeleland, and that it is therefore no country for the individual digger of no means and no experience. It is only by the employment of expensive machinery that reef workings can be made to pay in South Africa. Skilful miners from Cornwall are doing well in the mines here as managers, overseers, and in other responsible positions; but the demand for these is limited, and the ordinary white miner is not required, as several Cornishmen, who have recently returned home disappointed, have found to their cost. For this is a black man's

country; native labour is abundant, efficient (the Mashonas are hereditary miners), and so cheap that no white labour can compete with it. These elementary facts should be impressed on the minds of poor men at home who have read glowing tales of the fortunes made by diggers in Australia and California, and who imagine the conditions are the same in Africa. The white unskilled labourer can do nothing here; if he remains in the country he is likely to degrade into that shame of our race to be found in every country where native labour is procurable, the mean white, a lower creature far than the black savage by his side. The merchants at Cape Town are now overwhelmed with applications from honest and well-educated young Englishmen, victims of the South African boom, or rather of their ignorance of what it signifies, eager, starving as they are, to accept any employment, and do nigger's work at below a nigger's wage.

But Matabeleland offers a good opening to emigrants of the right sort from home; farmers and skilled artisans are wanted; the latter, of

course, have a very good chance indeed in the new country, provided they be steady men, but even they should not arrive in an indigent condition. Masons and carpenters, more especially, readily procure work at high wages just now, for all the new townships have yet to be built. Expert prospectors, acting on their own account or as agents for others, were doing very well when I left the country, and there was room for more. Amateur prospectors were plentiful enough; a man of little or no experience in gold mining would travel through the country, give the natives a pound of beads or a few yards of limbo to show him where some ancient workings were, and then, without further examination, peg out his claim on them—with a fair chance, it must be allowed, of hitting on auriferous quartz of high grade, for the ancient miners who had preceded him knew what they were about.

A young fellow with a few hundreds to risk might do worse than spend a holiday prospecting in Matabeleland in the company of an old hand. The expenses of travelling, once that he

has reached the country, are small; he might gain nothing but his experience; on the other hand he might be lucky enough to strike a good thing.

Storekeepers provided with a little capital are doing very well indeed in Matabeleland, but now that competition is increasing they must not expect the exorbitant profits that have prevailed so far. Even since I left Buluwayo prices have fallen by one-half.

I have spoken of the farmer's and the planter's chances in a previous chapter, but I may repeat that market-gardening in the vicinity of a rising township is the least speculative and most profitable business that can be undertaken by a pioneer. Some suggested philanthropical schemes for sending pauper agriculturists to Matabeleland are likely to prove failures, unless they be carried out on an almost impossibly large and munificent scale, for in a black man's land the squatter will become the mean white.

Many a young fellow has gone out to a colony innocent of its ways, invested his small capital in ranch or farm, and lost it all. Had he

kept his money in the bank until he had gained his experience he might, on the contrary, have made a fortune. Now the Chartered Company holds out to a stalwart youngster an opportunity of saving his money, while he is having a good look round the country and gaining plenty of useful experience, before he makes up his mind what to do and settles down. To enlist in the Company's Mounted Police for a few months is, in my opinion, the best thing the young fellow fresh from home or from the colony can possibly do on his arrival in Matabeleland. His constant patrols among the native kraals and his other duties will teach him much. I have met several men who have thus profited by their service in the Company's force. The troopers are a good lot, as a rule, a remarkable proportion of them being gentlemen, men who have held Her Majesty's commission, public school boys, University men and others.

I will conclude this chapter by quoting some passages from an article I wrote before I had seen Matabeleland itself. The article described my visit to the former home of the Matabele,

the Marico Valley in the Transvaal. This district bears a striking resemblance to many portions of Matabeleland and Mashonaland. It is no richer a land, no better in any respect, save that it has been occupied by white men for many years, and that it has recently been brought within easy reach of the railway. The Matabele High Veldt is far healthier than was Marico before it was cleared and cultivated. I merely put it forth as a suggestion; but why should not the Metayer system, as carried out in the Transvaal and as described below, succeed on Matabeleland farms later on—and at not a very remote date, should the country progress at its present rate—and so enable young men of some experience but small means to get a start in life without risking their capital? I have also quoted my description of the aspect of the Marico Valley, as I think it would apply exactly to some settled spot in the Matabeleland of the future :—

'A Cape cart carried my companion and myself in about five hours from Mafeking across the veldt to the head waters of the Notwani river.

Our road was over a grassy plain bright with many spring flowers, on which we saw numbers of buck and hartebeeste. At last we reached the foot of a low range of hills, wound up their slope till we attained the summit of a gap, and from here we looked down on the broad vale of Marico lying low beneath us. Our descent into this hollow land was much longer than had been our ascent to the gap, for from Mafeking we had been driving across the High Veldt, which is at a greater elevation than the Marico district by several hundred feet. It was a magnificent landscape that stretched before us, a rolling land as fertile as it was beautiful. On the hill-tops were green groves of wild fruit trees and flowering bushes. Undulating pastures, rich as those of Norman valleys, sloped to the flats that bordered the winding stream, while far off on the horizon lay the blue hills of the Witwatersrand. Amid the vivid green of the well-watered pastures of the valley bottom were scattered ruddy patches, the freshly ploughed fields—the soil is of the same red colour as in parts of Devon—while here and there a farmhouse with

its white walls and thatched roof peeped from the fresh foliage of the orchards that surrounded it. This Marico Valley, which extends for some forty miles, is known as the granary of the Transvaal, and the irrigated lands produce great quantities of grain.

'This fat land was the old home of Moselekatse, Lobengula's father. The Zulus and other warlike Kaffir tribes will occupy none but the richest country, and they will trek far to find it. Wherever these people have established their kraals one may be certain that the land is a good one. It is now forty years since the Boers from the Free State, with the assistance of Montsioa, the present chief of the Barolongs, whose principal kraal is hard by Mafeking, fell upon Moselekatse, drove his raiding warriors out of Marico, and sent them trekking north again to pastures new. Northward they travelled, murdering the unwarlike people and lifting cattle as they went, crossing hundreds of miles of good country—it is a sea of verdure for the most part, but yet not good enough to satisfy a Zulu—until at last, having wandered 450 miles as the crow flies

from Marico, they came to a region even more favoured than that they had left, and settled down in Matabeleland. The remains of Moselekatse's kraals are still standing in Marico. On the summit of one isolated *kopjie*, rising from the middle of the valley, I found what was probably the chief stronghold of this people, a magnificent strategical position with steep rocky sides, difficult to storm. On the highest point of this old kraal was a mound of stones, evidently an outlook station; it commanded a view over the country for a great distance in all directions; and a fair country it looked, with its park-like expanses of glade and knee-deep flower-spangled grass, its irrigated fields, its snug homesteads, and the pretty little town of Zeerust, with its white and scarlet houses, nestling among poplars and fruit trees some two leagues down the valley.

'This smiling champaign, which but a few years back was the stronghold of savagery in this part of Africa, the centre of a barbarous system of organised pillage and murder, that made of the surrounding country a wilderness

in which no man dare till the soil, now supports numbers of prosperous white farmers and also thousands of peaceable Kaffirs, who, freed from the terror of the old Zulu raids, live in safety on their lands, their cattle multiplying, the rich soil yielding abundant crops of mealies and Kaffir corn to the scratching of their rude ploughs. The Marico Valley once had the reputation of being the most unhealthy district of the Transvaal; but, now that the farmers' irrigation canals have drained the riverside swamps, to carry the water to the cornfields, the fever has almost entirely disappeared, and the white children I saw, even in low-lying Zeerust, looked as healthy and rosy as if they had been bred in England. Civilisation has wrought wonders in Marico, as it now will in Matabeleland.

'Our struggling farmers at home would be surprised to hear of the profits which fall to agricultural enterprise in Marico. I visited a typical farm of the valley, the property of Mr. H. Taylor, who, having purchased a strip of wilderness here thirteen years ago, has gradually

converted it into a garden. What he has done others can do, and similar careful farming should pay equally well in Matabeleland, as soon as a local mining population or the extension of the railway to Buluwayo affords a market for produce. When I reached Mr. Taylor's solidly-built farmhouse, with its whitewashed walls, deep eaves, and thatched roof, I could have imagined myself in some pretty Devon homestead, were it not for the tropical verandah, with the grenadillas trained along the latticework. There was quite an English-looking garden outside, where flourished choice roses, hollyhocks, geraniums, stocks, and other familiar flowers. There was a kitchen garden, too, with its strawberries, scarlet-runners, melons, and so forth, while the pears, plums, figs, and other fruit trees of England grew side by side with the lemons, oranges, and pomegranates of a warmer clime. What struck me after my experience of the slovenly ways of other colonies was that everything on this remote South African farm, from the dairy to the furrows of the ploughed fields, had that trim and finished appearance we

are accustomed to at home. On going round the farm I found all hands very busy. It was harvest time; most of the grain had been brought in; the threshing machine was hard at work, and the screw presses were packing the straw forage into compact bundles, while several waggons were loading up as rapidly as possible with both grain and forage for Buluwayo. Of this farm of 6,000 acres, 500 acres have been thoroughly cleared and are under irrigation. Three large dams store the summer floods, and from these the water furrows are carried through the fields of wheat, barley, and oats, to irrigate these winter crops during the winter droughts. The summer crops, such as maize, potatoes, and pumpkins, do not need irrigation, so portions of the property where irrigation would not be feasible are utilised for the cultivation of these.

'Mr. Taylor himself undertakes the cultivation of only a small proportion of his land. Four tenants, or rather partners—tenant is a term of too feudal a ring for democratic South Africa—work with him under a system common in the Dutch settlements, bearing a strong resemblance

to the Metayer system of certain districts in Italy. Mr. Taylor supplies each tenant with a house, an allotment of cleared and irrigated land, all seed corn, and allows him the use of ploughs and other agricultural implements. The tenant thus practically requires no capital when he enters on his farm; when he has got in his harvest he has first to return to Mr. Taylor the amount of seed corn that was advanced to him, and then the agricultural produce of the allotment is divided equally between landlord and tenant. The tenant has, of course, to keep his house in fair repair; he has to supply his share of labour to maintain the dams and water furrows; he has a free right of pasture and fuel—both abundant—and all profit he can make by his cattle is his own. No written agreement is entered into between landlord and tenant under this system. It is understood that the former can evict when he pleases, provided the tenant has received his share of the year's harvest, and that the tenant can at any moment inspan his oxen and trek off with his belongings. This system of farming appears to work very satisfactorily as a rule for both parties. Many a young Englishman would

have done well if, instead of purchasing a farm on his arrival in a colony, he had first gained his experience without any risk of his capital as a Metayer tenant. I will now give two examples of what poor men can do for themselves in Marico. One of Mr. Taylor's tenants entered upon his allotment six months ago, his sole possession being a waggon and team of oxen. He has now received for his half share of the wheat and forage he has produced 450*l.* He estimates he will make 600*l.* this year, while his outgoings, for boys' wages, &c., will not exceed 100*l.* Another tenant came here five years ago, being 300*l.* in debt. He has now paid off his debt and has in all earned nearly 3,000*l.* I saw this man driving about on a Sunday in a spider trap for which he had given 120*l.* Mr. Taylor's estate also supports some hundreds of Kaffirs. They have free pasture and can clear and cultivate land for their use. In return for this they are called upon at certain seasons to weed the fields or thresh the corn. In all, they give about a month's labour in the year, receiving free rations but no pay while they are at work.'

V

THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY'S MINING LAW

THE mining law in Matabeleland is identical with that in Mashonaland; but special privileges were granted to the men who took part in the recent expedition. Each volunteer had a free right to peg out twenty claims in Matabeleland at the termination of the war, and this right was transferable. For four months, from December 25 last, the volunteers had a monopoly of selection, as the Matabeleland goldfields were not thrown open to the world until April 25. Since April 25 anyone in the country is entitled to peg out a block of ten claims, a claim in both territories being 150 feet by 600 feet. The holder forfeits his block should he fail to sink a 30 feet shaft upon it within four months of registration; but if he has performed this

amount of development he can obtain another mining right entitling him to peg out another ten claims, and so on. When I was in the country the Chartered Company, taking into consideration the then lack of mining tools, was always willing to grant extension of time to applicants showing good cause, and in the new laws I believe that the above conditions have been slightly modified.[1]

Critics of the Chartered Company often speak of it as a corporation of greedy capitalists, whose enterprise can enrich none save themselves and other wealthy speculators; but, as a matter of fact, the Company is wisely doing its best to make of this a good poor man's country. By poor I do not mean pauper. The Company, by putting impediments in the way of capitalist land-grabbers, has made it possible for a man of moderate means to have his share of the Matabeleland High Veldt, and the mining regulations likewise compare very favourably with those of

[1] Concentration of development work on particular reefs is permitted. Thus, the owner of five blocks can sink one 150 feet shaft on one of his blocks, instead of sinking 30 feet on each of the five blocks.

other countries. In order to obtain a mining right from the Company an individual must apply in person at the mining office, when he will receive his mining license entitling him to peg out his ten claims only.[1] The Company thus limits the use of licenses to men who are in the country, but the holder of a license can, of course, dispose of his rights to a third party. Capitalists and large syndicates will, no doubt, in time absorb most of the claims, but in order to do so they will have to purchase each separate mining right or claim from the individual holders in the country. The cost of a mining license is 1*s.*; the registration and inspection fees amount to about 17*s.*; and on the payment of these nominal sums any man can prospect on his own account, and, if lucky, possess his portion of the golden reefs; owners of adjacent claims can unite in little syndicates, as they are now doing in many cases, while many an artisan and small farmer will acquire a sufficient sum by the sale of his claims to give him a good start in the new

[1] The right to peg out a much greater number of claims has, in certain instances, been granted to individuals who have rendered special services.

country. The Company exacts no rent on mining claims, but when arrangements are made for the flotation of any mining property into a joint-stock company, the Chartered Company is entitled to one-half of the vendor's scrip. The system practically comes to this: the Chartered Company allows a man to peg out five claims for himself on the condition that, while doing so, he pegs out another five claims for the Company. But, as a matter of fact, each case is treated on its merits, and in every flotation that has come under my notice the Company has agreed to take as its share considerably less than the specified 50 per cent. of the scrip.[1]

In the Transvaal things are very different; the capitalist has it all his own way, the poor man has no chance. There the heavy monthly rent that has to be paid on each claim precludes any but the wealthy from engaging in mining enterprise. On that goldfield, again, it is not

[1] Lord Grey, while addressing a deputation at Fort Salisbury last August, pointed out that the right to 50 per cent. seldom entitled the Chartered Company to more than a quarter interest in the Company floated.

necessary that a man should apply in person for his mining license. A resident in the country is in no better position than one living in a foreign land, for the latter can readily obtain a mining license through the holder of his power of attorney. This system opened an easy road to fraud, of which the Johannesburg speculators were not slow to avail themselves. Should a capitalist need a certain number of licenses he had but to present himself at the mining office, and produce so many powers of attorney drawn up in the names of his wife, his children down to the baby in arms, of Tom, Dick, and Harry in different parts of the world, of men long since dead, and even of people who never had any existence whatever. Corrupt officials connived at the trick; bundles of these sham powers of attorney were hawked about, and a license, taken out in legitimate manner by a man living in the country, had no more value than one of these forged documents. Several other of the Chartered Company's regulations could be adduced as showing an intention to profit by the experiences of neighbouring communities. The

rights of the individual immigrant are carefully safeguarded, and Matabeleland will not be permitted to fall into the rings of unscrupulous speculators.

I have already pointed out that considerable depression has recently prevailed among the Mashonaland settlers, who consider that Buluwayo's boom has been at the expense of Mashonaland's prosperity. In every township they have been holding indignation meetings, at which they have aired their various grievances, and in many cases have blamed the Chartered Company for misfortunes which cannot fairly be laid to its charge. Their most serious grievance of all is the alleged tendency of the Chartered Company's mining regulations to prevent the influx of much-needed capital into the country. The Company's claim to 50 per cent. of the vendor's scrip on the flotation of a mining property into a joint-stock company was, I found, the one feature in the mining law which was wholly objectionable in their eyes. It was in vain to remind them that the Chartered Company has invariably made arrangements to

accept a smaller share of the scrip (about 33 per cent., for example, in cases I know of). They maintain that such a claim on the part of the Company, on the discovery and flotation of a good property, is a severe tax on capital and a check to enterprise, and that the holding of so large a proportion of the scrip by the Chartered Company gives it the control of the subsidiary mining company, a condition which would make capitalists fight shy of the undertaking. The objection appears to be a frivolous one. The fact that so important and responsible a Corporation as the British South Africa Company —whose interest it is to maintain its high name, to advance the prosperity of its territories, and to obtain a revenue—possesses a considerable stake in the mining companies, must certainly act as a security to the investing public, and prove a protection against bogus flotations. The 50 per cent. clause, far from repelling capital, should have the effect of attracting it. The Company is entitled to its share of the mines, whether it receives it in the form of rent, royalty, or otherwise, and the scheme which has

been adopted appears to be the most advantageous for all parties. As the Chartered Company practically takes nothing from the prospector until he has made a rich discovery and can well afford to pay, he has little cause to grumble; if he is a man of some means there is nothing to prevent him developing his property himself and pocketing all the profits, for the Company can claim nothing unless flotation takes place. There are, I believe, some people in Mashonaland who would scarcely be content were the Chartered Company to make them a present of all its lands and reefs.

Mr. John Hays Hammond, the distinguished American mining expert, who is acknowledged to be the greatest living authority on quartz mines, is now travelling in Matabeleland and Mashonaland. He represents a very large amount of American capital, which he is investing in such mining properties as he approves of. Of the general prospects of these goldfields he has already given a very favourable report. Mr. Hammond is now also mining adviser to the Chartered Company, and in consequence of his

representations to Mr. Rhodes the Company's mining regulations have been considerably modified. The new Mining Law was drafted by Mr. Hammond, and, as a representative of capital, he finds no fault with the 50 per cent. clause. Since I wrote the above, which appeared in the form of a newspaper article, I have met Mr. Hammond and talked the subject over with him. He has kindly furnished me with a description of the new Mining Laws and a statement of his own views, of which the following is an abstract :—

The new Mining Law which has just been adopted by the British South Africa Company has been primarily based upon the American Mining Law. The resemblance is, however, rather general than special. In the adaptation of the American Mining Law various objectionable features have been eliminated, many improvements and modifications, dictated both by American and South African experience, have been introduced; administrative provisions of the Transvaal Law, proved by extended local experience to present certain practical advan-

tages, have been incorporated, with the result that the new Law may fairly be said to combine the merits of two dissimilar systems, and this without sacrifice or compromise in matters of principle.

The chief difference between the American and Transvaal Mining Laws may be briefly stated as follows :—The Transvaal Law gives to a claim-holder the right of mining all such portions of a mineral deposit as may lie vertically below the surface of his claim. The American confers the same right, and in addition grants the privilege of following a reef on its 'dips, spurs, and angles,' even when this involves its pursuit outside the boundaries of the ground situated vertically below the surface of a claim. In other words, the owner of the outcrop, or its equivalent, is entitled to the whole of the deep level areas, and thus the distinction between outcrop and deep level properties, to which in the Transvaal considerable prominence has been given, is at once abolished. In the application of the American principle, however, the Chartered Company's Law is in many important

respects superior to the American, which, having suffered in the first instance from lack of sufficient definition, has had to be continuously supplemented by judicial decisions, with the inevitable result that laborious pruning and codification would now be necessary were it desired to give it succinctness and comprehensive exposition. The framers of the Chartered Company's Law have had the advantage of commencing where the American Law leaves off. Codification has been possible, whilst opportunity has at the same time been afforded for the introduction of amendments in respect of many matters wherein errors of principle have insensibly arisen in the United States practice. Thus, in particular, fixed rules for the determination of the extent of the 'extra-lateral rights' in individual cases have been laid down, whilst no condition has been imposed rendering the enjoyment of these contingent upon the presence of the 'apex' of the reef within the boundaries of a pegged-out claim; the Chartered Company's Law in this respect exhibiting a marked improvement upon the American.

As regards the relative sizes of claims in the Transvaal and in the British South Africa Company's territories respectively, it may be stated that in the former a claim measures 150 feet on the line of reef, and 400 feet on the dip, and in the latter 150 feet along the reef, and 600 feet on the dip. Whilst, however, in the Transvaal only one claim may be pegged out under one license, in the Chartered Company's territories a block of ten claims may be located, or an area equal to fifteen times the area of a Transvaal claim, carrying with it the further right of indefinite pursuit of a reef upon its dip, rendering the value of such an area for mining purposes possibly equal to fifty or sixty times that represented by a Transvaal claim. To hold such a block in the Transvaal a prospector would have to pay to the Government monthly a minimum amount of five shillings for each claim of which it was composed, such license moneys constituting an incessant drain upon his resources, and, in the majority of instances, absolutely preventing any comparatively poor man from acquiring mining property. In

marked contrast to this, the Chartered Company requires practically no payment for licenses prior to flotation, and only stipulates as a condition of tenure that a far from excessive amount of *bonâ fide* development work shall be annually performed. In other directions also, the interests of the legitimate prospectors have been carefully safeguarded. In the Transvaal the ground open to prospectors generally is exceedingly limited; thus, in the absence of special agreement with the owners of private farms, it is confined to such portions of proclaimed farms as have failed to be considered sufficiently valuable to be taken up by the owners and their friends prior to proclamation. In the Chartered Company's territories private and public grounds are alike open, whilst further protection is afforded by the fact that, prior to the location of any claim, discovery of 'reef in place' has been made a *sine quâ non*. By this means the locking up of large tracts of unproved ground for purposes of speculation will be prevented, and all alike will enjoy an equal chance of profiting by a first discovery.

Summing up, therefore, it will at once be evident that the interests of a prospector will be far better protected in the Chartered Company's territories than in the Transvaal. In the first place, his operations will not be confined to an artificially restricted area; in the second place, on discovery of a reef he will be permitted to peg out a substantial area of mining ground, which he will hold practically free of expense, the only condition of tenure being the performance of a limited amount of development work, which it will be in his own interests to execute. In the third place, the absence of excessive indirect taxation and the presence of cheap labour will both facilitate mining work and reduce expenses.

Under these circumstances the claim preferred by the Chartered Company to share with the prospector the rewards of his discoveries can at once be justified. The paramount right of the Company to all minerals occurring within its domains is not disputed. This includes the right of selection of any mineral-bearing areas for its own purposes. Its action as regards

prospectors will, when analysed, be found to amount to nothing more than deferred selection. In the first instance, it places prospectors in a position to acquire and hold far larger mining properties than the same men under the same conditions would be able to take up and retain in the Transvaal. That a portion of the ground thus acquired should be held in trust for the Company is a reasonable demand. The prospector is placed in precisely the same position as if the rights conferred by his prospecting license had in the first instance been somewhat less generously bestowed. No call is made upon him until such time as he is in a position to deal with his property. No hardship is accordingly entailed upon him, and the facts only require to be stated to afford convincing demonstration that the outcry which has been raised in certain quarters against the Company's action in this matter has been based upon an utter misconception of the circumstances.

VI

THE CHARTERED COMPANY'S GOLDFIELDS

(*a*) In Matabeleland

By August last upwards of 51,000 claims had been pegged out and registered in Matabeleland and Mashonaland, upon which all fees had been paid. These claims placed side by side would form a belt of 1,400 miles in length, a fact which will give some idea of the extent of the goldfields. Of these, 15,000 claims were pegged out in Matabeleland within six months of the occupation, and new reefs are being continually discovered.

Glowing as are the accounts of rich finds that reach us from Matabeleland, I doubt whether they are exaggerated, as a rule; but of course up till now a limited amount of development has been done, few shafts have yet

been sunk to any depth, and little, therefore, is known of the real value of the reefs. When I was in the country our hopes were based on little more than the very encouraging promises of the surface scratchings, but of the extent of the auriferous reefs and of the marvellous richness of the surface quartz there could be even then no manner of doubt. The experts I met declared that in no country they know of is there so much visible gold as in Matabeleland—not that this is necessarily a good sign. They brought in specimens from all parts of the country, which not only betrayed their glittering wealth to the eye, but also panned out well. They all appeared to be very satisfied with their discoveries, and agreed that if but one-tenth of the reefs do not belie their present wonderful promise the prosperity of this country is assured. It was extremely improbable, they argued, that the auriferous quartz lay on the surface only; it would be an unprecedented phenomenon were all these reefs to pinch out. It would be as if Nature had planned a cruel practical joke on a gigantic scale, with which to befool the world's

gold-seekers. The letters I have recently received from friends in Matabeleland show that the development which is now being energetically carried on throughout the goldfields quite confirms the high expectations that were entertained by old miners from the beginning.

It appears that there are two main gold belts in Matabeleland, one extending from Tati to the Hartley Hill district, in a north-easterly direction, and another extending from Buluwayo eastwards to connect with the Victoria goldfields. The four principal goldfields discovered up till now in Matabeleland are known as the Gwailo, the Bembezi, the Motoppo, and the Mavin. I have visited several of the reefs in these districts and seen pannings taken from a great many claims, with results which I shall describe further on.

So far, very few claims have been pegged out on virgin reefs; the prospectors, as a rule, have merely annexed the ancient workings with which the country is honeycombed. Who those miners of old may have been, Portuguese, Phœnician, or Arabian, is still a mystery, for the natives have

preserved no traditions concerning them. The discovery of two old cannons on a ruined fort commanding some disused workings, not far from Buluwayo, seems to show that the Portuguese, if not the first seekers after the precious metal in that region, did at any rate prosecute mining operations of a superficial description some 200 years ago. Most of the workings are undoubtedly of far greater antiquity; but the workers have left few traces behind them to show of what age or race they were. The origin of the wonderful Zimbabwe ruins, the soil round which is full of gold beads, chains, and other ornaments, seems to be still a matter of vague conjecture, and even the interesting discovery of a copper coin of the reign of Antoninus Pius, at the bottom of an ancient shaft near Umtali, does not throw much light on the history of these mines. Whoever the unknown people may have been who worked here, they must have drawn an immense quantity of gold from every part of Mashonaland and Matabeleland. As a rule their workings are superficial, and in many cases they have only removed a portion of the outcrop.

None of their shafts have been sunk below the average water level, which shows that they possessed no appliances for pumping. Their processes must have been of a very crude description; it is evident that they could only make the richest quartz pay, so have left untouched a seemingly unlimited amount of auriferous reef, despised by them as of too poor a quality, but good enough to prove highly profitable to the modern miner with his improved methods, and with really hard quartz they could not deal at all. On some hill sides, where there is no water to contend with, our prospectors have cleared out ancient shafts to a depth of 100 feet and more. Ancient alluvial workings also abound all over the country, and in fact, so thorough has been the exploration in the past, that though our prospectors have reported alluvial goldfields at the head waters of the Lunde and elsewhere, no alluvial that would pay white men to work has yet been discovered.

The American and Australian experts in the country have expressed themselves very well satisfied with the appearance of the Matabeleland

reefs, which are generally found on a formation of slate, sandstone, and schist. They consider the country is highly mineralised throughout. Mr. Hammond has visited all the mining districts of Matabeleland and Mashonaland. He states that from a geological point of view the indications are favourable, that the reefs belong to the class known as fissure veins, which insures their persistency in depth as well as laterally. He satisfied himself on this point, the importance of which can be understood when it is remembered that it was first reported that the ore bodies belonged to the class known as segregated veins, which are always very limited in depth. 'Of course, only by thorough and extensive development can the pay-shoots on the reefs be found and followed up,' explained Mr. Hammond, 'but pay-shoots there are.' 'The quartz veins,' he reports, 'are very similar to those of California, carrying free gold, iron, copper, pyrites, galena, and zinc blends.' The transport of batteries to this remote region will be exceedingly costly for some time to come; but notwithstanding this, seeing that fuel and water

are everywhere abundant, and that cheap native labour is procurable, it is estimated that quartz yielding 10 or 12 dwts. to the ton ought to pay very well, even at present. Capital is now flowing into the country and machinery is being set up, so that it should not be long before deeper workings prove whether this is indeed, what it is believed to be by many, one of the richest goldfields in the world.

A short description of those portions of the gold belt which I visited myself may prove of interest, as giving some idea of the prospects of the country. I have already spoken of the farming possibilities of the High Veldt in the Gwailo district. This district has undoubtedly a great future before it, for not only is the best farming land in the country included within its area, but it also contains what promises to be the richest goldfield in Matabeleland. The site for the Gwailo township has been well chosen. It is situated under a wooded hill near the source of the Gwailo river, about 110 miles from Buluwayo. The gold-bearing reefs are from twelve to thirty miles from the township,

in a mountainous country where fuel is abun dant. The hills are overgrown with mountain acacia and yellow wood, the latter of which is fit for sawing, and is employed for timbering mines and other purposes. The whole district is very well watered, and there are many perennial streams which will be available for water-power, even through the dry season, if native reports prove accurate. Apparently the only drawbacks to the region—and sportsmen will soon remedy that—are the numerous lions, which often devour the oxen and donkeys of the prospectors.

The marvellous mineral wealth of the district is attracting numbers of white men, and even so far back as last April, when I was there, some 200 prospectors were encamped amid the ancient gold workings with which this portion of the country is honeycombed. I met several of these prospectors, and found all were sanguine and satisfied with their discoveries. At that time some 2,000 claims had already been pegged out by Sir John Willoughby's syndicate, the Mashonaland Development Company, the Bechu-

analand Exploration Company, the Buluwayo Syndicate, and the Mashonaland Agency; and development work was being pushed on with all possible speed. Many prospectors were also pegging out on their own account, and there was room for hundreds more. Since then the township has sprung up and will soon be a considerable place; further valuable discoveries have been made, and the number of white men has greatly increased. Stands in the township are fetching very good prices.

In no part of Mashonaland or Matabeleland did the ancients carry out such extensive workings as in this district, and these workings are deeper as a rule than they are elsewhere; it is evident that this was one of their most profitable goldfields. The Dunraven reef, one of the most promising, on which Sir John Willoughby's syndicate has pegged out forty claims, will serve as an example of what has been discovered here. This reef is on the usual formation of slate, sandstone, and schist. The outcrop is traceable on thirty out of the forty claims. The ancients have worked upon the reef

throughout its length, but have left it untouched for a breadth of four feet. The quartz is soft and of a dull white colour, having the appearance of loaf sugar, and carrying no visible gold; not the sort of stuff a prospector would as a rule expect much of, but it is likely to prove as rich as any quartz in the country. I saw the panning of some samples from the solid outcrop, which showed a prospect of from ten to fifteen ounces. Fair specimens taken from thirty of the claims showed an average prospect of over two ounces. This reef can be developed at very small cost; for, situated as it is on the slope of the hill, it can be worked by adits alone. Mr. MacIntyre, the manager of the syndicate, assured me that three levels could be opened out without sinking any shaft, and that this would give 300 feet of backs, opening up sufficient ore, at the very lowest estimate, to keep a twenty stamp battery constantly running for four years.

The Bembezi also is a very promising gold-field. Amongst others is what has been named the Queen's reef. The ancient workings on this

reef consist of a trench of an average depth of nine or ten feet, extending along the line of reef for 200 yards. The water level is soon reached, so the old miners were unable to work to any depth. This reef is from ten to twelve feet in width. A bar of quartzite, eighteen inches wide, and carrying twelve to fifteen pennyweights, runs along the middle of the reef. The reef is vertical. Shafts have been sunk into it to a considerable depth by the Willoughby syndicate, and the ore that has been brought up looks very good, showing a prospect of more than two ounces. Two miles from the Queen's is the Royal Reef, on which the same syndicate has pegged out ninety claims. This reef, from four to five feet in width, is apparently continuous, without a break in it. Throughout the claims the outcrop appears, and the ancient workings are considerable. Pannings showed a prospect of from two to three ounces.

I visited the Mavin district, and found several prospectors at work amid some very likely-looking reefs under the Khobeli Hill. We found visible gold in all directions among the ancient

workings, and pannings taken from the walls of the old shafts showed very good prospects. This district too is attracting numbers of white men at present; and still further to the north, at the head-waters of the Sebakwe, some adventurous prospectors, as far back as February last, discovered reefs of extraordinary richness in a wild and uninhabited country abounding in big game. The claims there pegged out by some fortunate friends of mine have turned out very well indeed. I have selected the above properties for mention because I have some personal knowledge of them. There are many others, no doubt as good, some possibly better; but these will serve as fair examples. The considerable development of Matabeleland properties that has taken place since I was in the country appears to have proved that the surface prospects have not been misleading, and that the reefs are no more likely to 'pinch out' here than on other South African goldfields.

With regard to the presence of other minerals in Matabeleland but little is yet known. Coal has been discovered, and iron is plentiful. At Iron

Mine Hill, between Gwailo and Fort Charter, I saw the trenches of the extensive workings from which the natives for generations have extracted the iron of which they make their assegais. Large deposits of salt are also found in the pans to the westward of Buluwayo.

(*b*) In Mashonaland.

When we turn to Mashonaland it is possible to speak somewhat more definitely of its prospects as a gold-producing country. The surface indications are much the same in both territories; but in Mashonaland two years' exploration and more has been done, many mines have been developed, and the auriferous reefs have been proved to run deep and broad. And yet, because so far there has been but a limited output, many people at home are of opinion that the Mashonaland goldfields have failed; and in some newspapers I still find it boldly asserted that there is no gold at all in the country. Many do not seem to realise that a goldfield in so remote a region cannot be developed in a

few months. As a matter of fact, it is marvellous that so much has already been done under the particularly unfavourable conditions which have prevailed here up till now. Had it not been for the causes to which I have before alluded, viz. the impossibility of obtaining a sufficiency of native labour until the Matabele war had brought security to the frontier, the difficulty and cost of communication, and the lack of capital, a considerable output would ere this have clearly demonstrated that Mashonaland is one of the greatest gold-producing countries in the world. There is no reason to think that this territory, as regards its mining possibilities, is inferior to Matabeleland, for that up till now it has produced so little is no evidence of its worthlessness. At present all goods have to be carried here from the termini of the Cape or Transvaal railway systems on ox waggons along many hundreds of miles of difficult road, at extravagant cost. The freight to Mashonaland *viâ* Natal, the shortest and cheapest route, amounts to 30*l.* a ton, and it is estimated that on the average the expense of transport trebles

the original prices of commodities. As an example of the tax that is imposed on enterprise by the existing cost of transport, I may mention that 10,000*l.* has to be paid for the carriage of a twenty stamp battery to the Victoria district. Such charges, of course, check the development of a country, and the introduction of mining and other machinery has in many cases been postponed until communication has been made easier and cheaper. This the Beira railway will shortly do. It is difficult for one who has not visited this country to realise how pressing is the need for the completion of this line. It will, as I shall show in another chapter, bring Salisbury within a few days of the coast, and reduce freights by two-thirds.

By August last nearly 37,000 claims had been pegged out in Mashonaland—that is, 3,560 in the Salisbury, 6,150 in the Victoria, 10,150 in the Manica, 6,510 in the Mazoe, 2,600 in the Lo Magundi, and 7,590 in the Umfuli district. Mashonaland has passed through a long period of depression, but the tide has already turned. Numbers of settlers of the right sort are now

entering the country by way of Beira, while capitalists, at last reassured as to the safety of the land—notably American capitalists, who sent their experts out before them to spy out its richness—are embarking in large speculations on the Mashonaland gold reefs, and arrangements are being made for the flotation of several properties. On some of these properties extensive development has been carried out; five and ten stamp batteries have been erected, and quantities of rich quartz are 'at grass.' When I was in the country, in May, only one battery had started work since the war; but since then milling has commenced in earnest, and we shall not have to wait much longer for results.

Fort Salisbury itself is the centre of a considerable mining district, and, as this township will always remain the seat of government and capital of both territories, it is sure to be a flourishing place. It is, perhaps, the healthiest of the Mashonaland townships. The beautiful mountainous country of Mazoe has attracted a number of prospectors who have great faith in the future of its extensive goldfields. Of the

more distant Lo Magundi district, we shall probably hear a good deal in the near future. Some of the shrewdest miners in South Africa maintain that the richest reefs in all the Chartered Company's territories are those of this gold belt. At this moment prospectors who represent influential syndicates are there exploring and pegging out their claims; and men who have travelled throughout these regions are of opinion that if a payable alluvial goldfield is to be found anywhere in Rhodesia it will be in Lo Magundi's country.

The best known and most developed goldfields of Mashonaland are those of the Victoria and Manica districts. I travelled through both districts and visited some of the principal mines, a description of which, as I found them at the end of last May, will show to what extent mining operations have already been prosecuted in Mashonaland. I do not mention these particular mines because I have any reason to suppose that they are the best in the country, but because they happen to be the ones I visited.

A two and a half days' journey by coach will

bring the traveller from Fort Salisbury to Victoria, Mashonaland's second township, a far more prettily situated place than the seat of government. It is built on a grassy platform at the meeting of two rivers, the Mshagaske and the Macheke, whose clear waters alternately rush over sands and rocky boulders and repose in deep still pools teeming with crocodiles. From the township, standing as it does at some height above the neighbouring country, a fine view is commanded in every direction over leagues of breezy pasture, dotted with thickets of dark bush, while all round, but not so near as to shut out the health-giving wind, are wooded mountain ranges of bold outline, through whose gaps glimpses are caught of still higher and more distant purple domes, these last containing the golden reefs which are this country's hope. Victoria does not present the ugly, bare appearance of most new colonial settlements. It is a smart, pretty little township of neat red brick houses with verandahs, and gardens of homely English flowers. Even the fort, hurriedly raised at the time of the Matabele scare, is almost picturesque.

The mud houses, of which there are still many, deep-eaved with thatched roofs, have a comfortable old-world air; and when the avenues of blue gum trees are fully grown this will look even more charming and cheerful a place than it does now. For some unexplained reason there is a good deal of fever here, but this, no doubt, will gradually disappear. Victoria was very quiet when I was there; there had been an exodus of two-thirds of its inhabitants to booming Matabeleland; most of the houses were shut up, and there were scarcely more than one hundred white men left. This almost deserted village, like Salisbury, was in a depressed condition. The settlers that remained were full of their grievances, and did not stint themselves in the exercise of their British privilege of grumbling, but I met none who had lost faith in the country itself. A number of excellent mining properties are scattered over the Victoria district, and on several of these sufficient work has been done to prove that the reefs are deep and rich, and that their early 'pinching out' need not be feared.

While I was staying at Victoria I visited, among others, the Cotopaxi reef, a property which has perhaps been more fully developed than any in the district; the American experts are highly pleased with it. Mr. Clark, a high authority, who is working in co-operation with Mr. Hammond, told me that the aspect of the country, the character of the reef, and the intelligent manner in which the work was being carried on, recalled to his mind the first-class Californian mining properties. A pleasant ride across the veldt, now by the side of palmetto-fringed streams, now through coarse grass which rose two feet above a horseman's head, and now through groves of acacia, wild apples, and Kaffir oranges, brought me to the foot of a lofty peak of pyramid shape, with bare granite crags at top, but elsewhere covered with trees, whose foliage was of ruddy, golden, and other rich autumnal tints; and half-way up a steep shoulder of this peak, at the head of a romantic gully, I saw the white buildings in the vicinity of the mine. It is approached by a well-constructed road, which winds up the gully; on either side

the rocky slopes are overgrown with mountain acacias of large size (which supply the necessary timber for the shafts and drives), beautiful pink-blossomed creepers depending from their branches. From the residential buildings a magnificent view is obtained over the hills and plains; it would be difficult to find anywhere else a mining property so picturesquely situated. But it is something more than picturesque. The Goldfields of Mashonaland Company has pegged out seventy claims on this reef, and their extensive workings have proved that they here possess an enormous body of auriferous quartz of uniform character and richness. On this highly-favoured property Nature seems to have done all she could to make easy the extraction of the gold from the mountain side: there is an abundance of fuel and water in the immediate neighbourhood; there is no danger of the mine flooding, and pumps are not needed, for, situated as the reef is on a steep hill side, all the working can be done by adits, and the quartz from every part of the mine is brought to the lower of the two existing levels

and carried to the open down a drive 400 feet in length. Development will consequently be very cheap and unattended with difficulty.

I was hospitably received by the staff of carefully selected Cornishmen who have so diligently and intelligently carried on the development of this fine property. They are evidently very keen and proud of their mine, as all true Cornish miners should be: they have certainly good reason to be proud, for this is a model mine, and while there has been no extravagant expenditure and no waste of labour, short-sighted economy has been avoided. Money has been well laid out to procure the best of plant, and all work has been thorough. Mr. Morrish, the manager, has proved himself to be a master of his profession. There are no daub huts here; all the buildings are of substantial brick and iron. The staff is most comfortably housed. To carry the quartz from the mine, a solidly laid tramway passes down the lower drive, and thence for about half a mile down the gully to the ten stamp battery, one of Sandycroft's latest. Only a year since this was a

desolate hill side, inhabited by wild beasts alone; and it is indeed amazing that so much has been done, despite the compulsory cessation of all work for some time before and during the Matabele war (when all the Mashonas working on the mine took refuge in the mountain tops), and despite the fever, which is exceptionally severe here and has prostrated the majority of the white men. The mine is in a highly advanced state, and a large amount of development has already been accomplished: 2,000 feet of the reef have been opened out, and a great quantity of quartz is at grass. In default of some necessary piping, which was still on the road, the battery was idle when I visited the mine; but it has since then set to work, and there will be plenty for it to do for years to come. I explored the shafts and drives, and saw the visible gold on many portions of the walls. I witnessed some remarkable panning not only from the quartz at grass, but from samples taken fairly from different parts of the mine. In one case several handfuls of the finer stuff were taken haphazard from the stacked quartz. This was panned as

it was, without being crushed, and showed an extraordinary tail of coarse gold that ran right round the dish. There were a number of plump Mashonas, Matabele, and Shangans at work on the mine, and the manager told me that since the war he had not experienced the slightest difficulty in obtaining as much native labour as he required.

A two and a half days' journey by coach through a delightful country brings the traveller from Fort Salisbury to Umtali, the capital of the Manica district, undoubtedly far the most prettily situated of Mashonaland's townships. From the sloping ground on which stand the police camp and the hospital, one looks down upon the little settlement half a mile away, its red brick houses scattered over a green flat, bold, wooded hills surrounding it on every side, while in the background towers above the lesser heights the rugged mountain, purple in the distance, on which is the stronghold of the troublesome chieftain Umtassa, the self-styled king of the Manicas. Umtali, like Salisbury and Victoria, has its grievances, holds indignation meet-

ings, and sends querulous telegrams to Cape Town; but the people, realising that the long wanted Beira railway is being vigorously pushed forward at last, and that the day of prosperity is nigh, are beginning to shake off their depression. Umtali has indeed good reason to be hopeful. It is most favourably situated; all the rich reefs in the Manica district are in its close vicinity; the very hills which overshadow the township are full of workings, ancient and modern, while the most promising properties—the Rezende, the Penhalanga, and the Maggie, for example—are within a few miles of it. Consequently, when the Beira railway has been extended to Umtali the mines will be working under far more advantageous and economical conditions than any others within the Chartered Company's territory; ore of much lower grade will be found to be payable here than could possibly prove so in the remoter districts of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, and there is no reason why most commodities should not then be as cheap in Umtali as in Cape Town; for, as the Chartered Company imposes no custom

duties, the 3 per cent. transit duty, which Portugal is entitled by the Convention to levy on all goods passing through her territory into Mashonaland, will be the only tax to which they will be subjected.

I have already spoken of the magnificent agricultural and grazing possibilities of the beautiful mountainous country between Umtali and the Portuguese frontier. The gold belt extends along these ranges from west to east for about ten miles in our territory before passing into the debatable land, whose ownership is still undefined. On this gold belt, as elsewhere throughout the country, all enterprise was interrupted for many months by the Matabele war; but now the mines are being vigorously developed, and the wealth of the district will, no doubt, be soon proven to the world by a considerable output of gold. The people here, all of whom are in one way or another interested in the mining industry, are sanguine of their prospects, and it is evident that the ancients also thought very highly of this gold belt, for all the valley bottoms have been turned up with

their alluvial diggings, while the hill sides are full of their rough reef workings.

I visited some of the principal mining properties; among others the Rezende Reef, on which the United Goldfields of Manica Company has pegged out fifty claims (Portuguese claims, each of 100 mètres square). The reef is on the steep slope of a pretty valley, seven miles from Umtali. As we crossed the valley I noticed that the ground was everywhere burrowed with large holes, where the ancients had their alluvial diggings. I was shown the three long adits by which it was hoped that the reef would be cut, and after scrambling for some distance higher up the mountain we came to the outcrop on which the ancients had carried on extensive workings. Experts think highly of this property; the mine can be easily worked; so far as it has been exposed the ore is not refractory, and it assays and pans well. Since I was there the adit has cut into the reef, which is five feet broad and rich.

I also visited the Penhalanga Reef, where the Penhalanga Gold Mining Company has pegged

out fifty claims. The prospects of this property are considered to be very good. The quartz is of almost unique character, highly mineralised and studded with crystals of red chromate of lead. On entering the main adit by candle-light, I found that in places it presented a most curious and beautiful appearance, the walls glowing and flashing with the blood-red crystals, as if this were one of those magical jewel-hung caverns one reads of in the oriental fairy tales.

The debatable land beyond the Crow's Nest is said to be the part of the country richest in gold, so it is to be hoped that the arbitration now proceeding will confirm the Chartered Company's title.

VII

COMMUNICATION

THE difficulty of transport has so far been Mashonaland's great trouble. The distance of the terminus of the Cape railway system at Vryburg to Salisbury is nine hundred miles; the waggon road is of the roughest description; goods, even in the dry season, are often delayed many months on the journey; and during the rainy season, when the rivers are flooded and deep quagmires are formed in the valley bottoms, communication is practically cut off. The road which connects Mashonaland with the Transvaal railway system is somewhat shorter. The Beira route is obviously the natural one into Mashonaland. From that seaport to Umtali is only two hundred and thirty-five miles, and Salisbury is but one hundred and fifty miles further. The road, too, is in good condition. But unfortu-

nately, between the Manica Highlands and the coast extends a broad belt of swampy lowland, densely overgrown with tropical bush and forest, infested by that curse of Africa, the tsetse fly, whose bite is fatal to horses and cattle. It is true that goods can be carried through the 'fly' on ox waggons, and this has often been done; but the transport charges are of course almost prohibitive, based as they are on the certainty of losing every ox after a few journeys across this deadly region. Accordingly, up till now, traders have chiefly relied on the uncertain, slow, and very costly system of native carriers for the transport of their goods from the coast. It was therefore of urgent importance that the Beira railway should be pushed on as rapidly as possible, until it had spanned the fly belt, at least; and that this work, on which the prosperity of the country so much depends, has progressed very tardily until quite recently is due partly to the lack of capital, which came in by driblets, partly to the fever which proved very deadly to the white men engaged on the line, partly to the destructive floods in the rainy

season, and partly no doubt to mismanagement at the early stages of the undertaking.

What they term the Beira railway fiasco constitutes the principal grievance of the Mashonaland settlers. The delay in carrying that railway across the fly has retarded the progress of the country and maintained the cost of transport from the coast at 30*l.* a ton, so that the prices of even the necessaries of life are still extraordinarily high. For the last three years the settlers have struggled on as best they could, knowing that the development of the country's resources would in time bring prosperity within their reach; but, being for the most part men of small means, they have found it difficult indeed to make both ends meet; many have drifted into debt, and despair of holding out much longer, while not a few have left the country in disgust. The storekeepers and traders, exacting the high prices which have crushed the unfortunate settlers, point to the difficulties of communication and to the transport rates as their justification, and are ever the most loudly indignant orators at the public meetings when

the Beira railway is the subject of discussion. They abuse the whole Beira route in unmeasured terms; they condemn the railway as being hopelessly ill-constructed, and assert that it is so carelessly managed that their goods are often detained for many months at Beira, while they also suffer heavy losses from theft, their cases of stores being frequently broken open and looted in transit. They describe the cart road between Umtali and the present railway terminus as being in a vile condition, and declare that the fly belt extends for many leagues westward of Chimoio, and that until the railway has been carried to within sixty miles of Umtali (which cannot be done before the coming rains), transport riders must expect to lose their oxen when bringing up goods from the railway to Mashonaland. The storekeepers have put their case strongly, but there is another side to this question. The above statements have been spread and accepted as true throughout South Africa and at home, with the result that travellers have been deterred from entering Mashonaland by the natural route—the only route that

any one who has tried the others would adopt—and that merchants are still forwarding their goods *viâ* Vryburg and Pretoria.

I travelled last June from Umtali to Beira, and have come to the conclusion that, though the Mashonalanders had an undoubted grievance, their spokesmen have grossly exaggerated the facts, and by doing so have considerably prejudiced the interests of the country. It is not difficult to understand the motives of those who have disseminated these misstatements. After making every allowance for the cost of transport and other considerations, I maintain that the middlemen in Rhodesia have from the commencement combined to keep up an unwarrantably high standard of prices, which exceeds anything that I have experienced in other parts of the world more remote and difficult of access than this. The average storekeeper in Mashonaland expects to make his fortune within the course of a year or two, at the expense of his fellows—chiefly, of course, by the sale of vile whisky. Were this a rich alluvial goldfield, or were there some other exceptional circum-

stances which enabled the settlers to acquire wealth rapidly, storekeepers would be justified in grasping their share of the abnormal prosperity by making abnormal charges: but such charges are preposterous in Mashonaland in its present state of depression; for, as things are now, the non-producing middlemen who grumble the loudest are the only members of the community who are enriching themselves.

It must be difficult for youngsters in the Civil Service, and others of limited income, to make both ends meet in these townships, wherein I have seen articles, the cost of transport of which was trifling in proportion to their value, sold at as much as six times their retail price in Cape Town. The Chartered Company has endeavoured, as I have pointed out, to make of this a good poor man's country, but this intention is frustrated by the middlemen. The poor man is crushed by the expense of living in the towns; if he can afford to import his stores from down-country, to buy his stand and build his own house, he can live economically; but otherwise it is difficult for him to do

so. Four pounds a month is charged for one little room in Salisbury, and I found that the rent of a small house, which cost 800*l.* to build, amounted to 360*l.* a year. I may mention, as an example of the profits that are being made, that when I was in Buluwayo a bottle of whisky cost five times as much there as it did in the Bechuanland Border Police canteen forty miles further on. The firm that supplied the police made a very good profit out of the transaction, so what must have been the profit of the Buluwayo trader? Some well-meaning people may urge that in this particular instance a high price is an advantage to the community, and perhaps it would be so were it not that prices can be ruinous without being prohibitive in the least. Those who drink immoderately will drink the same amount whatever be the cost, and with many men the high prices, leading to hopeless debt and so to recklessness, but drive to heavier drinking than would be the case were stimulants cheaper.

The smaller shopkeepers often explain that the matter does not rest with them, for, living

from hand to mouth, having no capital and little credit, they cannot buy in a cheap market, but have perforce to purchase their goods from other up-country traders at extravagant prices, and, when given credit, must pay interest at usurious rates. In some cases the goods have passed through the hands of half a dozen middlemen, each of whom has taken his profit, before the retail shopkeeper, having first added his own profit, sells them to the consumer with all their accumulation of exorbitant profits piled upon the original price. But the large trading societies in this country have no such excuse as this. They have capital behind them, can buy in the cheapest market, and are therefore far more to blame than the smaller fry. Each year these traders neglect to import a sufficiency of stores during the dry season when the roads are open; it pays them best not to do so, for the consequent scarcity of commodities during the rainy season affords an admirable pretext for pushing prices still further to famine rates. It is the consumer alone who suffers. I believe that the storekeepers, who are the leaders of

the present agitation, in their hearts dread the advent of the railway for which they are clamouring; for not only will it reduce freights by two-thirds, but it will introduce capital and competition, fair profits and fair prices, a state of things which will deprive most of the present grasping and unbusiness-like traders of their occupation. They wish to maintain the existing unsatisfactory system as long as possible; and it is their policy, while posing as agitators for the public good, to hoodwink the outer world with their unscrupulous misstatements, and prevent a proper appreciation of the great advantages of the Beira route.

These storekeepers, who have not altogether unnaturally taken advantage of their opportunities, will now have to content themselves with reasonable profits, or make room for others. There are clear signs to show that the prosperity of Mashonaland is about to advance by rapid strides, the old rings and monopolies will vanish before competition, and the capital needful to carry on this competition is already on its way here. While at Salisbury I met

some shrewd gentlemen from home who represent some north country capitalists; they are, I understand, about to buy stands in the townships, where they will establish large stores. Their goods will be imported through Beira, and they are of opinion that they will reap a very handsome profit indeed if they sell at half the existing prices. This enterprise deserves success, and if it abolishes the present system, by which the middleman grasps everything and impoverishes his fellow settlers, who have such difficulty in holding their own in these hard times, a great boon will have been conferred upon the country.

I travelled last June from Umtali to Beira, and I will now describe the route as I found it. In the first place, the rainy season lasts for only three months on the east coast, so that the road should be quite open for at least eight months of the year, which is ample for all Mashonaland's needs. I found that at the time I made it, the journey of 235 miles from Umtali to Beira was thus divided—115 by cart road from Umtali to the terminus of the railway at

75-mile peg; 75 miles by railway to Fontesvilla on the Pungwe river; and 45 miles by river steamer from Fontesvilla to Beira. As no coach was then running, and no waggons were going down the road, my three companions and myself had to tramp it to 75-mile peg. At that season the climate is delicious, bracing, and healthy. Even were there no railway, this route to Salisbury would be the pleasantest as well as the shortest. The cart road has been put in excellent condition, it is well drained, the bridges that span the stream are of solid construction, and are capable of resisting the summer floods. No fault can be found with it: it is, indeed, the only road worthy of the name that I have seen in the country, and yet its supposed bad condition is one of the favourite themes of the Salisbury orators. I soon began to realise how reckless had been their misrepresentations. We found a fair hotel every fifteen miles, and were constantly crossing streams of clear, cold water. We had to rough it no more than if we had been taking a walking tour on the high roads of Normandy. Our

baggage was carried by native bearers, each man receiving his ten shillings for taking his 50 lbs. load to 75-mile peg. Passing through the lovely Manica country, with its rolling wooded hills and fair valleys, we gradually descended some 4,000 feet to the lowlands. It was perfect weather for walking, not too hot by day, a fresh breeze always blowing, while at night and in the early morning it was almost too cold. A few marches brought us to the low country, where the palms, bamboos, and dense undergrowth enabled us to realise that we were within the tropics, and our path often lay for miles through rank grass twelve feet and more in height. We met several trains of coolies bound for Umtali from the railway terminus, laden for the most part with cases of beer and whisky. I may mention that even under the present expensive system of carriage the freight of a bottle of whisky to Umtali from Beira amounts to about one shilling, scarcely enough to justify the remarkable difference between Beira and Umtali prices. Even in the heart of the last rainy season, when the railway com-

munication was interrupted, it was not by any means so impossible to get up goods from below as was alleged by the traders who grabbed their famine profits at that time. I know that for one firm at least whisky was carried across the flooded land all the way from Fontesvilla to Umtali, by bearers, at 1*l.* the case.

On reaching Chimoio, a miserable Portuguese settlement seventy-four miles from Umtali, we satisfied ourselves, after many inquiries, that the report circulated by the Salisbury traders, to the effect that there is tsetse fly in this neighbourhood, was a pure fabrication. The tsetse is never seen at Chimoio, and the western limit of the fly belt is some twenty miles to the eastward of this. It is therefore certain that the railway, when it has been extended to Chimoio, will have completely bridged this belt, and that transport riders need have no fear of taking their waggons to this point. Chimoio will not for long remain the terminus of the railway, for it is a most unhealthy place in the wet season, being surrounded by swamps and wastes of very high grass. Lions abound in the neigh-

bourhood, and are a great nuisance to the inhabitants.

We came to the formation of the railway at 89-mile peg. Mr. Lawley had then upwards of 2,500 natives at work on the extension, and labour was obtained without difficulty. Slow as has been the progress of this railway hitherto, the necessity of its speedy completion has now been fully realised; the work is being pushed on as rapidly as possible, and Mr. Lawley assured me that, unless some unforeseen accident happened, the railway would have bridged the fly and reached Chimoio by the end of October. This should bring Umtali within four days of the coast by rail and coach, and the journey from Beira to Salisbury should not occupy more than six days.

At 75-mile peg we found that quite a considerable settlement—chiefly of bamboo huts —had grown up around the terminus. Here we saw sheds full of stores of all descriptions, and huge stacks of goods standing by the line, all awaiting waggons to transport them to Mashonaland. Some of these goods have been

lying here uncalled for since December, and I was told that there was another great accumulation of stores at Chimoio, which had been carried across the fly by native bearers. It was not, therefore, the fault of the railway company that there was, even at that late season, a dearth of necessaries in Mashonaland, and that almost famine prices prevailed; the traders who neglected to send down waggons were alone to blame. We passed no waggons on our way. If the agitating traders were so anxious to get their goods up, why had they not long before had their waggons in readiness at the railway terminus? Instead of doing this, by disseminating false reports as to the condition of the road and rail, they had succeeded in frightening the transport riders away from this route. The Trans-Continental Telegraph Company is now sending its material through the fly belt—which narrows considerably in the winter months—by a service of light waggons. Travelling rapidly backwards and forwards across the infested belt by night, when the danger is not so great, the oxen are enabled to make several journeys

before they fall victims to the tsetse. There is no reason why the traders should not have organised a similar scheme. Lord Grey, writing to the 'Times' from Delagoa Bay on September 13, states that even at that date there was an accumulation of over 1,200 tons waiting at 75-mile peg for transport waggons to be moved up-country.

The railway journey to Fontesvilla now occupies about twelve hours. Having heard the line so violently abused, we were astonished to find it in such excellent order. It is, of course, true that the enterprise was muddled at first. It is stated on good authority that the line was not well surveyed; the rails might with advantage have been heavier (though I am assured by those who should know best that they are strong enough to carry the heaviest machinery that will be required in Mashonaland), and the earthworks in places should have been higher. But there is no doubt that the railway will answer its purpose, and is anything but the useless concern it is often represented to be; it is settling and getting firmer daily, and in

the opinion of experts it will suffer but slight damage in future rainy seasons. A train now runs regularly each way daily, capable of carrying one hundred tons, which is far more than the supply of ox waggons in Mashonaland can possibly cope with.

The railway journey was a pleasant one, sometimes through tropical forest with great trees and dense undergrowth, sometimes across undulating wastes of long grass and bush studded with palms, a great game country where lions and buffalos abound. We saw our first tsetse fly at 45-mile peg, and then, for a few hours, our carriage was crowded with the little pests. We reached Fontesvilla by dinner time, and put up at a very fair hotel, the loud croaking of legions of frogs giving us due notice that we were surrounded by malarious swamps. On the following morning a small steamer took us down the Pungwe river to Beira. The lake-like expanses of the river reaches are bordered by mangroves and dense bush; the hippopotami are numerous here, and we frequently saw their heads rising above the muddy water.

The tales of the Mashonaland traders, to the effect that their goods are detained at Beira and lost and stolen in transit, have persuaded numbers of merchants that it is unsafe to forward anything by this route. There is absolutely no foundation for these reports. Goods are pushed up from Beira far more rapidly than the consignees can carry them away, and there is no detention of any merchandise save for very good cause, such as the inability of the consignees to pay custom dues and freight. One of the traders, who at a recent meeting complained bitterly of such detention, omitted to explain that he was unable or unwilling to pay the railway charges, and had asked the Company to give him credit. The Company, having had some experience of Mashonaland traders as debtors, refused to open a ledger account with this gentleman, but is quite prepared to despatch his goods to him with all promptitude as soon as he sends payment for their carriage. I have also ascertained that there has been but one instance of loss of goods in transit, when a Kaffir stole some stores of

trifling value; he was caught, and the owner was compensated. Such an incident might have occurred on any line. In short, so far as the condition of both cart road and railway are concerned, there appears to be absolutely no justification for the present agitation in Mashonaland, and I also found that the steamer and lighter service between Fontesvilla and Beira is being conducted in a regular and in every way satisfactory manner. But were the railway to carry their goods for nothing, and the Chartered Company to supply them with free waggons at 75-mile peg, I believe that some of these agitators would still find something to growl at.

When I was in the country the rates, inclusive of loading and unloading charges, from Beira to Umtali, amounted to about 25*l.* a ton, that is, by lighter to Fontesvilla 1*l.* a ton; by rail to 75-mile peg, 3*l.* 15*s.* a ton; and by waggon from 75-mile peg to Umtali about 1*l.* a hundredweight. Making all allowance for the ravages of the tsetse fly, this last charge of 20*l.* per ton for waggon transport along one hundred and fifteen miles of excellent

road is a preposterous one, the rate being kept up by lack of competition and the widely circulated misstatements as to the various perils of the road. As soon as the railway reaches Chimoio there is no reason why the waggon rates for the remaining seventy-four miles to Umtali should exceed 4*s*. a hundredweight, or to Salisbury 12*s*. The waggon rates between Vryburg and Buluwayo—six hundred miles of most difficult road—amount to only 23*s*. a hundredweight.[1]

We found the much abused Beira to be a clean little place, with good streets and fair stores and hotels. Built as it is on the sandy shore and almost perpetually swept by a fresh wind from the sea, it is undoubtedly healthy, though the neighbouring swampy country is very malarious in the wet season. All the white men on the railway construction were recently down with fever, and a large proportion died. The agitators who so mercilessly abuse those to whom this undertaking was entrusted should call this fact to mind. On one occasion Mr.

[1] The railway has reached Chimoio since I wrote the above.

Lawley, in a letter to his directors, explained that his delay in supplying certain reports was unavoidable, as he had lost three bookkeepers in succession of fever in one month, and was without one at the time. However, there is practically no risk for one travelling through the country in the dry season. The Portuguese are waking up to the fact that Beira, being the gateway of the Chartered Company's territory, is likely to become a port of considerable importance, and they now propose, should the capital be forthcoming, to construct a railway from Beira to Fontesvilla. They also have a scheme—a visionary one, I think, and beyond their capacity—to carry another line from Beira to Sena, on the Zambesi, in order to tap the trade of the Zambesi valley, that river gradually becoming unnavigable in consequence of the silting up of its Chinde mouth.

As regards the immediate destination of the railways which are opening up communication between the Chartered Company's territory and the seaports, the Beira railway will shortly be extended to Umtali, while the Northern railway

from Cape Town is rapidly being pushed forward in the direction of Buluwayo. Since I was in the country this line has been extended from Vryburg to Mafeking, bringing Matabeleland one hundred miles nearer to civilisation. The line is now to be carried on to Gaberones, and thence to Khama's capital, Palapye. Mr. Rhodes anticipates making an arrangement with the Imperial Government for its extension to Buluwayo itself.

At present the steamer service to Beira amply suffices for the traffic. The Union and Castle lines afford direct communication between Europe and Beira. The Union Company, whose connection with South Africa is of many years' longer standing than that of any other line, and whose vessels have carried on the Cape of Good Hope Mail service under contract with Her Majesty's Government since 1857, has also a contract with the Portuguese Government, under which its finest steamers leave Hamburg and other Continental ports every twenty-eight days, load at Southampton, proceed to Lisbon, Teneriffe and Cape Town, and thence to Delagoa Bay, Beira, Chinde, Mozambique, Ibo and Zanzibar

(and intermediate ports), calling at the same places on the homeward journey. So soon as the traffic to Beira increases sufficiently, the Directors of the Company will take steps to meet it.

Pending the completion of these railways, which will prove such an inestimable boon to Rhodesia, the waggon routes are maintained in as good condition as is possible. At the commencement of the winter large gangs of natives, under efficient engineers, repair the damages which the summer floods have inflicted on the roads leading from Mashonaland to the south. The roads from Salisbury to Pretoria, and to the Beira railway through Umtali, are exceptionally good, and a considerable sum is spent on their maintenance. A new road has been opened out between Buluwayo and Salisbury, through Gwailo and Fort Charter. The worst road of all is that between Mafeking and Buluwayo, and the foolish policy which the Imperial Government has pursued with regard to the semi-independent Kaffir chieftains within the Protectorate is to blame for this. It would surely not have

been a great hardship on these brawny blacks who, secure under our protection, acquire wealth and fatten in lazy peace, were each tribe compelled to keep in repair that section of the high road which lies within its territory; but instead of this the Kaffirs are permitted to place obstacles in our way. The very roughest part of the northern road is that which passes through Khama's country. The first stage beyond his capital, for example, is responsible for the death of many oxen and horses, the road here being strewn with great boulders and sharp rocks for many miles. A very little labour on the part of his people would set this right. But Khama, whom I believe to be a thoroughly well-meaning and good man, will not have the road improved on any account, and I am sorry to say that the missionaries encourage this teetotal despot, whom they pet and flatter in an egregious manner, to pursue this policy, which they maintain is in the interests of Christianity.

This childish attempt at obstruction can of course do nothing to stay the white man's advance on the rich territories to the north, and

its only result is the infliction of unnecessary torture on a great number of unfortunate animals.

The coach services throughout Rhodesia have recently been much improved. Coaches run to Buluwayo from both Pretoria and Mafeking. Salisbury is connected with Victoria, Umtali, and the Beira railway by other coach services. The conquest of Matabeleland has opened a shorter route to Fort Salisbury from the south, and for the future the mails, instead of passing through the Transvaal, will be carried across British territory *viâ* Mafeking, Buluwayo, and Fort Charter.

The telegraph system is being spread through this portion of South Africa with extraordinary rapidity. The wire connecting Fort Salisbury with Cape Town has been working for some time. A few months after the termination of the Matabele war the telegraph was carried on from Mafeking through Tati to Buluwayo, and no sooner was this effected than receipts at the rate of 3,000*l.* a year were taken at the Buluwayo telegraph office alone. A line

will also be constructed as soon as possible from Fort Salisbury to Umtali and thence to Chimoio, to connect with a telegraph from Beira. The Trans-Continental Telegraph is also progressing apace: the Salisbury-Tete and the Blantyre-Tete sections have been already completed.

TIME OCCUPIED AND FARES ON THE PRINCIPAL ROUTES FROM THE COAST TO MATABELELAND AND MASHONALAND.

I

From Cape Town, viâ Bechuanaland.

Cape Town to Vyrburg by train daily. 44½ hours.

	£	s.	d.
First Class	8	11	4
Second „	5	17	8
Third „	3	4	6

Vyrburg to Buluwayo by weekly post-cart. Nine days. Fare 29*l.*

Now that the railway has been extended to Mafeking, the journey by this route is cheaper and occupies less time.

II

From Cape Town, viâ the Transvaal.

Cape Town to Pretoria by rail. 58 hours.

	£	s.	d.
First Class	11	18	9
Second „	8	5	6
Third „	4	13	9

Pretoria to Buluwayo by weekly post-cart. Six days. Fare 22*l.*

Coach from Buluwayo to Salisbury. Five days. Fare 12*l.*

III

From Beira.

From Beira to Fontesvilla by steamer. One day. Fare 25*s.*

From Fontesvilla to Chimoio by train. One day. Fare 3*l.* [?]

From Chimoio to Salisbury by coach. About four days. Fare 9*l.*

Only 25 lbs. of baggage are allowed free on post-carts and coaches, and for anything beyond that amount prohibitive rates must be paid. Heavy baggage must therefore be sent on by ox-waggon. The transport riders are generally ready to take passengers on their waggons. The rate of progress is very slow, but the charges are moderate, and one can carry any reasonable amount of baggage free. I only had to pay 5*l.* for my fare from Mafeking to Buluwayo, with nearly 200 lbs. of baggage. The lowest sum (exclusive of cost of provisions on the journey up-country) for which an emigrant can reach Buluwayo from England is about 18*l.*—*i.e.* from Southampton to Cape Town by Union Steamship, 10*l.*; railway fare from Cape Town to Pretoria, 4*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.*; by waggon from Pretoria to Buluwayo, about 3*l.*

VIII

ADMINISTRATION

THE scheme which has now been adopted for the administration of Matabeleland, though criticised as faulty in some of its details, has met with a general approval in South Africa. It was at first feared, and not without reason, that a Crown Colony would be established here; but Her Majesty's Government, bearing in mind that Matabeleland as well as Mashonaland is included within the region described in the Charter as the principal field of the operations of the British South Africa Company, that the concessions held by the Company are applicable to the whole of Lobengula's territory, and that the recent war had been principally carried on at the expense of the Company, decided that it would be right to place Matabeleland under the direct administration of the Company, and that the Company's

machinery for government which was at work in Mashonaland should be extended with certain modifications to the newly acquired country. The Company was to be left to govern the entire territory; but in order that the rights of the natives might be safeguarded, the Imperial Government was to be vested with a somewhat fuller control over the Company than heretofore.

The day will no doubt come when a representative form of government will prevail in Rhodesia. An agitation for an extension of local self-government in the townships has already commenced, and the settlers have also petitioned that one member of the Administrative Council, recently created by the Imperial Government, should be elected by ballot by the residents of the country. To accede to this desire, which is by no means general, but is rather the whim of certain busybodies, is out of the question at this early stage of the country's development, and to hold a general election by ballot would be extremely difficult. This small population, still unsettled, scattered over an immense territory, cannot yet be entrusted with

the control of the affairs of the commonwealth; and to invest the communities of the townships with unlimited borrowing powers would be a very dangerous experiment. A representative government, as things are now, would be prejudicial to the settlers themselves, as the wisest among them clearly perceive. All acknowledge that capital is the essential need of Mashonaland and Matabeleland; the capitalists who, having confidence in the strong, just and responsible government of the Company, are now prepared to invest in this country, develop its resources, and bring prosperity to all, would hesitate to do so were their interests to be placed at the mercy of the irresponsible vote of the present population. The bankruptcy of townships and a general sense of insecurity would be the probable result of such a scheme, while the Chartered Company itself would be prevented from reaping the fair reward of its exertions, and of the vast expenditure it has incurred.

Up till now, the Chartered Company's territory has been administered under a one man government, a benevolent despotism, the best

possible under all the circumstances, the most economical, the most efficient, the most prompt in emergency; for the Company has had the good fortune of securing the services of the right man, Dr. Jameson, whose energy, whose tact, whose large grasp of every problem and difficult situation, whose high genius for administration can only be fully realised by those who have been in the country and observed him when engaged in the performance of his duties. With his charm of manner, his straightforwardness, and the sound common sense of his arguments, he exerts a great influence over all who come in contact with him; and on several occasions I have seen a settler who has approached him boiling over with some imaginary grievance rapidly brought to reason by the Administrator, to depart in good humour and quite contented, though not a jot had been conceded to his importunity. In his capacity as Administrator, Dr. Jameson has to refuse many favours, and during the depression which has for some time prevailed in Mashonaland he has had to deal with a great deal of discontent on the part of the

settlers; but, dissatisfied as many of them profess themselves to be with the Company's policy, the Company's greatest enemy of them all has nought but words of highest praise and respect for Dr. Jameson. He is universally popular, despite the extreme delicacy of his duties and the firmness with which he supports the Company's interests against its foes.

But a one man government is open to the serious objection that it is only by occasional good luck that the right 'one man' is found; and he must be an exceptionally strong man who would administer Mashonaland. There is a natural distrust of the one man rule, for, admirable as it may be, it can only be a temporary expedient. Accordingly, it has been decided to create in Rhodesia a form of government which appears to have been modelled on that of the Indian Viceroy and his Council. The Agreement entered into between Her Majesty's Government and the British South Africa Company, executed on May 23, 1894,[1] provides that the administra-

[1] See *Papers Relating to the Administration of Matabeleland and Mashonaland.* Presented to both Houses of Parliament May 1894. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 1894. [C.—7388.]

tion of the government of the territories bounded by British Bechuanaland, the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the German Protectorate, the rivers Chobe and Zambesi, the Portuguese Possessions and the South African Republic, be conducted by the Chartered Company under an Administrator and a Council of four members, composed of a Judge and three other members, any two members of which shall form a quorum.

That the Imperial Government has reserved to itself a full control of the administration of the Chartered Company's territory will be seen from the following provisions in the Agreement, which ought to satisfy those at home who are jealous or mistrustful of the Company, and who consider it might abuse its power unless efficient safeguards were provided :—

The Administrator shall be appointed by the Company, with the approval of the Secretary of State, and may be removed either by the Secretary of State or by the Company, with the approval of the Secretary of State. He shall, unless sooner removed, hold his office for a term of

three years, and after the end of that term shall continue to hold his office until his successor is appointed. An Administrator whose term of office has expired may be reappointed.

The Judge shall be appointed by the Company, with the approval of the Secretary of State, and may be removed only by the Secretary of State. He shall be a member of the Council ex-officio.

The members of the Council, other than the Judge, shall be appointed by the Company, with the approval of the Secretary of State, and may be removed by the Company. On the expiration of two years from the first appointment of members, and on the expiration of every succeeding period of two years, one member of the Council shall retire from office.

When the Administrator or the Judge or other member of the Council resigns, is removed, or dies, the Company shall, within nine months of his resignation, removal, or death, appoint a successor, of whom the Secretary of State approves, and if they fail to do so the appointment may be made by the Secretary of State.

The Administrator shall, as representative of the Company, administer the Government of the said territories, but shall take the advice of his Council in all questions of importance affecting the government of the said territories. If in cases of emergency it shall be impracticable to assemble a quorum, the Administrator may take action alone, but he shall report such action to the Council at its next meeting. If the Administrator dissents from the opinion of the Council, he may overrule their opinion; but in such case he shall report the matter forthwith to the Company, with the reasons for his action. The Company may rescind the decision of the Administrator.

It shall be lawful for the Administrator, with the concurrence of at least two members of the Council, and with the approval of the High Commissioner, to frame and issue regulations; and every such regulation, after it has received the approval of the High Commissioner, shall on its promulgation have the force of law. Provided that either the Secretary of State or the Company may veto any such regulation at any

time within twelve months of the date of approval by the High Commissioner. In case of the exercise of such veto, the regulation shall be of no force and effect, save as to any act done, right acquired, or liability incurred thereunder before the exercise of the said veto had been communicated to the Administrator and public notice of the same had been given by him.

The Judge shall have jurisdiction over all causes, both civil and criminal, and shall hold courts at such places as may be from time to time prescribed by proclamation of the High Commissioner or by ordinance of the Company. The procedure, rules, and regulations of these courts shall be the same, so far as is applicable, as those of the Supreme Court of the Cape Colony; and all criminal cases that would, if the same had been tried by a Resident Magistrate in the said Colony, be liable to review by a Judge of the Supreme Court, shall be liable to review by the Judge.

In civil cases between native and native the said courts shall decide the said cases in accord-

ance with native law, in so far as the said law is not repugnant to principles of morality, or to any law or ordinance in force in the said territories; provided that in any suit in which the effect of any marriage contracted according to native law or custom shall be involved, such marriage may be recognised and regarded as in all civil respects and for all civil purposes a valid marriage, though polygamous, in so far as such polygamous marriages are recognised by native law or custom. In all civil cases between natives, any Magistrate or the Judge may call to his assistance two native assessors to advise him upon native law and customs, but the decision of the case shall be vested in the Magistrate or Judge alone.

The Magistrates shall be appointed by the Company, with the approval of the High Commissioner, and shall thereupon enter on office, but the appointment shall be subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State. The Magistrates may be removed either by the Secretary of State or by the Company with the approval of the Secretary of State.

The rights of the natives are carefully safeguarded by several provisions, from which I may quote the following :—

Fines levied upon native chiefs or tribes for misconduct or rebellion may only be imposed by the Administrator in Council, and every such case shall be forthwith reported to the High Commissioner.

Natives shall not be subjected to any exceptional legislation save as regards liquor, arms, and ammunition, and as regards the title and occupation of land as hereinafter referred to, and as regards any other matter which the Administrator in Council may with the approval of the High Commissioner and the assent of the Secretary of State subsequently by regulation define; provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent a hut-tax being imposed by legislative authority in respect of the occupation of huts by natives.

A Commission shall be appointed to deal with all questions as to native settlements in Matabeleland; it shall be called the 'Land Commission,' and shall be composed of three

persons, namely, the Judge, one member appointed by the Secretary of State, and one member appointed by the Company. Any decision of the Commission shall be subject to revision by the Secretary of State. The Land Commission shall continue for such time as may be approved by the Secretary of State after consultation with the Company, after which time all the powers and duties of the said Commission shall be vested in the Judge alone.

(Clause 27.) The Land Commission shall assign to the natives now inhabiting Matabeleland land sufficient and suitable for their agricultural and grazing requirements, and cattle sufficient for their needs. If the Company shall require any of the land thus assigned to natives for the purpose of mineral development, for sites for townships or any public works, then upon application to the Land Commission, and upon good and sufficient cause being shown, the Commission may order the land so required to be given up, and assign to the natives concerned just compensation in land elsewhere, situate in as convenient a position as possible and as far

as possible of equal suitability for their requirements in other respects.

No removal of natives from any kraal, or from any portion of land assigned by the Land Commission, shall take place to another locality except after due inquiry made upon the spot, and with the authority of the said Commission.

Natives shall have the right to acquire and hold and dispose of landed property in the same manner as persons who are not natives, and in all respects such property shall be liable in the usual manner for any obligations for which such natives may be liable. But these provisions shall not apply to land assigned to them by the Land Commission under Clause 27; and no contract for alienating or encumbering a native's land shall be valid unless it is made before a Magistrate and attested by him, after satisfying himself that the native understands the bargain.

The above regulations appear to be fair enough to both white and black in Matabeleland. While, on the one hand, the protection of the natives is amply secured, on the other hand there has been no creation of Kaffir re-

serves, and the settlers have not been restricted in their dealings with the land in the various ways advocated by certain well-meaning but misguided faddists at home. While the terms of settlement were being discussed in England, Dr. Jameson, after consultation with Mr. Rhodes, to some extent anticipated its provisions in so far as the treatment of the natives and the disposition of their lands were concerned. He took certain steps which I have described in a previous chapter, and which the circumstances of the case had rendered indispensable, for the Matabele were naturally unwilling to cultivate their land before some arrangement had been made as to their future, and a famine on a large scale might have been the result of delay in coming to an understanding with them. The policy then adopted by Dr. Jameson has since been ratified in every respect in the Agreement between the Company and the Imperial Government.

The scheme of administration instituted by the Imperial Government is probably open to the objection that it is in some respects even too

perfect, as being before its time. The machinery for government is to be more cumbersome and on a larger scale than is needed in a new country. A simpler and rougher machinery would have worked equally well until the territory had been much further developed. But, as it is, the Chartered Company, which has to pay all the salaries of Judge, Magistrates and other officials, as well as the costs of the Land Commission, and of any inquiry which the Secretary of State may think it necessary to institute into the administration or judicial system established in the country, will be saddled with a large and in some respects quite unnecessary expenditure.

Clause 34 is the only one in the Agreement to which I heard really serious objection made while I was in the Company's territory. It runs thus:—'Persons who may be appointed to such offices as may be designated in a proclamation or proclamations by the High Commissioner shall not (except in the case of an acting appointment) have any interest, either direct or indirect, in the commercial undertak-

ings or shares of the Company. The offices to be designated in the said proclamations shall be such as may be agreed upon by the Secretary of State after consultation with the Company.'

Now it is difficult to see why a Magistrate resident in Matabeleland may not be permitted, like other people, to have a stake in its fortunes. Nearly everyone in a new country is in a position to gauge the prospects of local enterprise and engage advantageously in legitimate speculation. If the Company's officials are to be prevented from doing so, the Company will be compelled to pay higher salaries than it does now, to secure the services of capable men. An unjust and quite needless hardship will have been inflicted on the Company's present Magistrates—a well-selected body of English gentlemen, who perform their by no means easy duties with zeal, tact, and integrity—if they are compelled, under penalty of forfeiting their posts, to sell the Company's shares, which, confident in the future prosperity of the territory, they have held from the beginning. There are probably some among them who would adopt the former alternative.

In concluding this little book I will repeat that there appears to be nothing now to prevent the rapid development of this region. The country is well-administered. The Company's mining and other laws have been wisely framed and are fair to all; the difficulties of communication have been almost overcome; while the numerous opportunities for profitable enterprise having a last been realised, the capital that was so much needed is flowing into Rhodesia.

The position of the Chartered Company should now be very secure. It is earning an ever-increasing revenue from trading licenses and other sources—each canteen license, for example, costs 100*l.* a year. Of the amount realised by the sale of township stands I have already spoken. The hut tax will in time be levied throughout the entire territory, and this should produce a very large yearly sum; on the 60,000 huts in the Victoria district alone the tax will bring in 30,000*l.* per annum. Lord Grey is of opinion that next year's revenue will more than pay for the cost of administration. All the proceeds from the sale of land and from

the mineral rights will therefore be available for dividends. It is, of course, impossible to estimate the value of the Chartered Company's large interest in the mining properties that may be floated in Rhodesia, but it will be very great should the auriferous reefs fulfil their promise.

Mr. Rhodes will now have his reward in beholding a prosperous community of his fellow countrymen in occupation of this rich territory, which, by his foresight, determination, statesmanship, and strife for years with opponents at home and abroad, he has secured to Great Britain. It should always be remembered that, had it not been for his untiring vigilance, this vast high plateau, with its gold and its wealth of pastoral and arable lands, would ere this have fallen into the hands of one or other of the three foreign Powers which keenly contested its possession with the Premier of the Cape Colony.

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